



# Seeds for Thought

A newsletter from the  
Master Gardener  
Foundation of  
Washington State

August 2011

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Nameplate photo by  
Mary Shane, Master Gardener  
Grays Harbor/Pacific Counties

Visit our website:  
[MGFWS](#)

## Food Tasting at Master Gardener Community Events

~Tonie Fitzgerald, WSU Extension MG Program Leader

With summer barely here in most parts of the state, it may be hard to think about harvesting garden produce, but we all know that, even in the worst years, at least *some* crops manage to grow to maturity. Regardless, it's never too early to start planning for garden celebrations.

For Master Gardeners who invite the public to events in demo gardens or community gardens, let's review the policies made in the interest of public safety. There are two things we need to consider: one is teaching about food and the other is serving it to the public.

### Teaching or Advising About Food Preparation or Preservation:

Basically, WSU's policy is that, because MGs aren't trained in food safety, preservation or preparation topics, we should not be advising clientele on those topics. MGs may, however, refer clientele to Food/Nutrition Extension educators, invite Food Nutrition Educators to speak at MG sponsored activities or provide WSU publications such as the free four-page color booklet written in 2010, titled *Food Preservation Resources*, C1117E. Here is the link to this publication at WSU Extension publications: [Food Preservation Resources](#). This booklet contains national and Washington state resources for research-based information on canning, drying, freezing, pickling, fermenting, jams and jellies; seasonal tips; hotlines for asking questions; tested recipes; and other information sources.

Talk to your program coordinator about ordering this publication to have at your events.

### Serving Food at Public Events:

WSU's only policy is that local (county) regulations are to be adhered to. In Washington state, each county or regional health department regulates preparing and serving food at public events. So, if you are going to serve food at an event, find out what your local health department or health district rules are. Some counties have stricter rules than others. Often, raw fruits and vegetables are excluded from regulation, but make a call and know for sure.

Have a great time preparing for your festivals!



Photo by Cory Vaughn

Tonie Fitzgerald, WSU MG  
Program Leader

## 2011 International Master Gardener Conference *Come for a time and a place you'll not forget!*

October 11 – 14, 2011, Charleston, West Virginia

West Virginia University Extension Service and the West Virginia Master Gardener Association have been granted the honor of hosting the 2011 International Master Gardener Conference in Charleston, West Virginia. Gardening enthusiasts, horticulturists and industry leaders will gather for this four day event during October when the West Virginia Mountains are ablaze with color.

Guests are invited to participate in pre/post conference and day tours to visit area gardens and some of West Virginia's cultural treasures. Keynote and other speakers include leading horticulture professionals from throughout the country. Lectures, workshops and educational sessions will be offered daily during the conference.

International Master Gardener  
Conference 2011



The conference will officially open with the "Taste of West Virginia" reception on the evening of October 11. Guests will be treated to the best of West Virginia cuisine, from the simplest to the most sophisticated foods. Full conference activities will kick off on October 12 and conclude on October 14.

During these two and a half days, attendees will have the opportunity to hear keynote speakers, and attend featured and concurrent sessions. In addition, there are over ten day tours to choose from for those who wish to visit gardens and local sites.

You are invited to come early and stay late and join one of the pre- or post-tours that are available. These range from one to three nights and travel to some of the most beautiful areas of our state.

Visit this website to learn more and to register: [Color it Green in a Wild and Wonderful Way!](#)

## President's Message

~~Judy Porterfield, Outgoing President, MGFWS

Dear Friends –

It is with a heavy heart that I share this message with you. I am leaving the MGFWS Board this month. An unfortunate concentration of health concerns, all of which must be addressed in the next six months, has made this necessary if I am to have any hope of remaining mobile. Christine Bailey, our stalwart Vice President from the Tri-Cities, will be temporarily taking over the president's responsibilities, per the Foundation's bylaws. Christine is dedicated to the Master Gardener program and knows our organization frontward and backward.



Judy Porterfield

I will be sorry to miss the conference in Ocean Shores. Not only is the beach wonderful in September, the conference itself promises to be fun, as well as offering everyone some wonderful educational opportunities. And that is what distinguishes — and unites — us all as Master Gardeners, isn't it? We love to learn, and we love to share what we learn. What a wonderful opportunity to spend time with other Master Gardeners and discover new things about this field that so fascinates us all.

My best to you all. I have loved every minute of working with you. I value the trust you placed in me and I am only sorry I have to cut my time short.

Cheers — Judy

## Spokane County WSU Master Gardeners Monitor Presence of Spotted Wing Drosophila

~~Penny Simonson, Spokane County Master Gardener Program Coordinator

With the first sighting of the Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD), having occurred in early June in the Tri-Cities area (Kennewick, Pasco, Richland), efforts to track this serious threat to fruit production have been stepped up in Eastern Washington.

Here in Spokane, trapping kits are hanging in the personal gardens of each of our 30 Plant Clinic Specialists (PCS) — a group of Master Gardeners in our program who receive advanced training and operate in a leadership capacity in our Plant Clinic and Resource Center.

Per the information and instructions received from WSU researchers, along with the simple traps, the PCS volunteers have also received intensive training on identification of the pest. Because the potential for damage to fruit and berry crops across Washington state is so high, evidence of the pest in home gardens will be one of the keys to reducing the threat to commercial orchards.

Anna Kestell, Education and Clinic Coordinator in Spokane County, made the simple SWD traps: a clear 16-ounce plastic cup with six or seven 3/16th-inch holes drilled in one side, a lid, four or five ounces of apple cider vinegar with one drop of unscented dish soap, a paper coffee filter, and something to hang the cup in a tree or on a stake. One wire hanger from the dry cleaner will make three hangers: two from the curved ends and one from the hanger top. The coffee filter is for straining the contents of the trap. Straining will be done every week in order for the cider to be replenished and to remove any other insects that may have become trapped.



Photo by Anna Kestell

SWD trapping kit

Traps will be monitored and checked once or twice per week through June and July. Because the Spotted Wing Drosophila may produce several generations during the growing season, it will be difficult to manage, especially on crops ripening during and after July.

Our Plant Clinic Specialists meet once per month for advanced-training opportunities. Using the teach-the-teacher concept, the group will share this training with their fellow volunteers during future Clinic shifts. This effort by Spokane County Master Gardeners is an excellent example of how volunteers across the state are an integral part of Washington State University research. WSU Master Gardeners are a volunteer work force that can be employed throughout our region to assist in the vital research for which our land grant university is so well known.

## \$175 Registration for WSU Master Gardener Conference Ends Soon

~~Kathy Eko, Publicity Chair, Grays Harbor/Pacific Counties Master Gardener Foundation

**Registration fees will increase to \$200 on August 15!**

**Take advantage of the lower price (\$175) by registering soon!**

Spend a few days by the beautiful Pacific Ocean at this year's WSU Master Gardener Advanced-Education Conference, September 22-24, in scenic Ocean Shores. Hosted by the Grays Harbor/Pacific Counties Master Gardener Foundation, this event guarantees three days of fun and learning. There will be 28 seminars to choose from, all led by experts in their fields. The only problem will be which sessions to choose! All seminars and general sessions will be held at the Ocean Shores Convention Center, only one block from the beach.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to enjoy keynote speaker **Amy Stewart**, the best-selling author of *Flower Confidential, the Good, the Bad, and the Beautiful in the Business of Flowers* and her just-published *Wicked Bugs: The Louse that Conquered Napoleon's Army and other Diabolical Insects*.

We will also welcome **Jane Billinghurst**, a WSU Master Gardener from Skagit County and the author of several nonfiction books, including *Temptress: From the Original Bad Girls to Women on Top* and her latest, *The Armchair Book of Gardens*. (See the article about topiaries by Ms. Billinghurst elsewhere in this newsletter.)

This year's silent auction is looking to be very exciting. Among the latest items for the auction is a weekend retreat at the private North River Resort. This 83-acre tract boasts two miles of hiking trails, fishing, clamming and a boat ramp to launch your kayak or canoe. Also now up for auction are:

- A one-night stay and breakfast for two at the historic Tokeland Hotel.
- A one-night stay for two at Willows Lodge in Kirkland, plus a \$200 dinner credit for their fabulous restaurant, The Barking Frog.
- A one-night stay for two at the serene Ocean Crest Resort in Moclips, just a few miles north of Ocean Shores.



Photo by Mary Shane  
(L-R) Dean Sutera, 2010 Conference Co-Chair, Charlene Magneson,  
Claudia Matthew, 2011 Conference Co-Chairs &  
Barb Sughrue, 2011 Conference Treasurer

Master Gardeners will have an opportunity to shop 'til they drop! In addition to sales by county Master Gardener foundations, outside vendors will be there with a variety of unique wares and merchandise to showcase their artistic skills. There will be plenty of books, plants and bulbs you will want to take home with you, too.

Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties are also pleased to offer some incredible pre-conference optional tours, including a trip to the Quinault Rain Forest and a fun and educational boat tour of the more than 25 miles of interlocking fresh waterways at Ocean Shores by the Electric Boat Company. Or you can choose to take a walking tour along the ocean shore with Alan D. Rammer, a retired Marine Education Specialist from the Washington State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. If you are coming to the conference with a spouse or friend, they may enjoy the Friday first-ever Companion Golf Tournament 9-Hole Scramble at the Ocean Shores Golf Course.

## New Master Gardener Demonstration Garden Opens in Gig Harbor at Sehmel Homestead Park

~~Karen Larson, Pierce County Master Gardener



Photo by Tom Larson

Ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new Gig Harbor Master Gardener demonstration garden in June. (L-R) Master Gardeners Mary Thorsen, Liz Lathrop, Betty Ryan, Karen Larson, Jan Pittman & Cyndy Dillon.

On June 25, 2011, the Pierce County Master Gardeners celebrated the grand opening of their new Demonstration Garden at Sehmel Homestead Park in Gig Harbor. The park is a 98-acre multi-use facility administered by the Peninsula Metropolitan Park District. It was a fun afternoon that included tours of the demonstration garden and the adjacent native-plant garden. Karen Larson gave the formal address, telling the guests about the history of the Sehmel family farm and shared the garden's future plans. Jan Pittman, a long-time Pierce County Master Gardener who was involved with a grassroots group tending the homestead as far back as the mid-1990s, enter-

(Continued on page 10)

## The Art of Topiary

~~~Jane Billinghurst, MGFWS Northwest Regional Vice President, Skagit County

*Please note the underlined text in this article is hyperlinked to further reading. Enjoy!*



*Photo by Jane Billinghurst*

*Box in swirl shapes, Bourton House, Oxfordshire.*

Shearing shrubs into ornamental shapes has been popular since Roman times. In letters to friends, Pliny the Younger extolled the beauty of elaborate clipped evergreens at his country villa in Tuscany. Centuries later and in chillier climes, the Jacobean garden designer William Lawson, who wrote books advising fashionable London businessmen how best to landscape their rural retreats, suggested the stirring sight of shrubs cut “to the shape of men . . . ready to give battle.” On a less combative note, in 1745, Louis XV attended the Ball of the Clipped Yew Trees, thrown in honor of his son’s wedding, dressed as one of the topiarized yews in the garden at Versailles.

By the 1700s, English landscape designers were tiring of topiary. In 1713, the garden critic Alexander Pope wrote a satirical piece in *The Guardian* in which he offered for sale an imaginary catalog of less-than-successful topiary designs including “St. George in Box; his arms scarce long enough, but will be in condition to stick the dragon by next April . . . A quickset hog, shot up into a porcupine, by its being forgot a week in rainy weather . . . Noah’s ark in Holly standing on the mound; the ribs a little damaged for want of water.”



*Photo by Jane Billinghurst*

*An English take on formal Italian topiary at Mapperton House in Dorset, home of the Earl and Countess of Sandwich.*



*Photo by Jane Billinghurst*

*Ceanothus on a roll in front of Auto Plus, Anacortes.*

Topiary has survived centuries of changing garden fashions and can be seen today in such formal gardens as Levens Hall in England, Het Loo in the Netherlands and George Washington’s Mount Vernon—or perhaps even in a garden near you. In January 2011, Valerie Easton wrote an article in *The Seattle Times* entitled “[Beacon Hill’s Fantastical Topiary](#).” On her bonsai safari through the neighborhood, she spotted, among other delights, “a laurel hedge clipped into a dragon, gumdrop shrubs and blue spruce carved into what might be space ships.”

Topiary shapes do not need to be confined to single shrubs. “Cloud” hedges cut to gently undulating forms give otherwise formal hedges a billowy softness. Or consider the curvaceous form of these hedges at The Veddw on the border between England and Wales, where garden designer Anne Wareham has created shapes that mimic the rolling hills that surround her garden.

Common subjects for topiarizing are box, yew, and holly, but many different shrubs can be used. The great Pearl Fryar in South Carolina, who is featured in the 2006 documentary “[A Man Named Pearl](#),” has conjured magical shapes from materials as diverse as flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), wintergreen barberry (*Berberis julianae*), baby’s breath spirea (*Spiraea thunbergii*), and winter honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*). Fryar has raised contemporary topiary to an art form, but topiary can be enjoyed on a more modest scale in home gardens as well. And if you don’t want to create topiary freehand, you can always buy metal frameworks to guide the shaping of your shrubs.



*Photo by Jane Billinghurst*

*Hedges trimmed to reflect the contours of the surrounding hills, The Veddw, Monmouthshire.*

Jane Billinghurst will be giving a presentation entitled “How People Garden” at the Master Gardner advanced-education conference in Ocean Shores in September. Topiary will be mentioned as one extreme in the dialogue all gardeners engage in with nature.

## Welcome to Washington

*~~Wilfred Wyffels, President, Master Gardener Foundation of Clark County*

For the second year, the Master Gardener Foundation of Clark County took on the responsibility of planting the “Welcome to Washington” sign on Interstate 5, just north of Mill Plain Blvd. in Vancouver. In 2010, the project came to us with little time to plan, so a very simple design was planted. For 2011, there was more time to plan. Master Gardener Sandy Burckhard and a team of other volunteers came up with the design of a red apple, complete with leaf and stem. They chose the plants using the criteria of specific colors, long bloom times and no maintenance. Small plugs were ordered early in the year. Once the plugs arrived, they were transplanted into four-inch pots at the Vancouver Heritage Farm greenhouse on a cold blustery day in early March. In addition to tending to thousands and thousands of plants for the plant sale, the greenhouse crew was also tending to 2,500 plants for the I-5 sign.



*Photo by courtesy of Wilfred Wyffels*

*Clark County Master Gardeners planting the “Welcome to Washington” sign on Interstate 5, Vancouver in May 2011.*

On the weekend right after the plant sale, when everyone else was still recuperating, 20 hardy souls came out to work for about four hours to plant the big red apple. Lessons learned from last year were applied. Paper weed barrier and mulch were applied first so we weren't trampling the young plants, and fertilizer was put directly into the planting hole rather than broadcasting, to avoid encouraging weeds.

The Washington state Department of Transportation pays the Foundation for the plants, and we donate our time and labor. It is a win-win for everyone. WSDOT gets a nice planting for little cost; we make some money we can put back into the community through our grants, and everyone driving up I-5 gets something pretty to look at. It should bring a smile to a lot of harried drivers. The I-5 sign falls under the “Adopt-a-Highway” program, so the Foundation has committed to designing and planting the sign for four years.

## Kitsap County Master Gardener Plant Sale 2011: Another Successful Event!

*~~Becky Croston, Kitsap Master Gardener Foundation Plant Sale Chairperson*

Once again the Master Gardener Foundation of Kitsap County Plant Sale cleared \$1,000 over the previous year, clearing \$10,450 in our two-day sale. Held on Friday and Saturday of Mother's Day weekend, about half our 260 Master Gardeners participate by doing everything from donating plants to working 90 hours preparing for the sale.

Work for the core committee of six starts with emails in January and ends with the “wrap-up meeting” soon after the sale. We utilize Constant Contact to notify the membership of all our foundation news. It was especially useful in getting the word out about our needs and for volunteer coordination.

We accept pre-approved donations from nurseries. We contract with one greenhouse for our tomato and pepper needs, paying minimal costs and providing labor. In consideration of Master Gardener work at our county gardens, we receive use of a building at the fairgrounds, signage and tables at no charge. The Kitsap County Salvage Team gathered 2,600 plants for our sale this year, more than twice their collection efforts last year. We started a “Fresh Flowers” sub-committee, and those colorful arrangements sure brightened up a building that otherwise is full of 70 tables loaded on top and underneath with “green plants.” Tomatoes are our big draw, so we offer about 30 varieties.

Each year we add more informational signage for the public and have handouts, along with a clinic with reference books. We invite our County Noxious Weed Coordinator to look for the “illegals” (none—yea!) and point out any extremely invasive plants, which we choose to cull from our sale.

As a thanks to our Olalla Food Production Garden for providing so much produce to the South Kitsap Helpline Food Bank, the food bank’s greenhouse donated three carloads of veggie starts and bedding plants to our sale, including two gorgeous Supertunia baskets.

Marketing is a must, so we take advantage of free publicity, pay for more and use road signs, bookmarks and posters to help get the word out.

About 26 of us work each day, from set-up day Thursday through Saturday, when leftovers are hauled to our nearby Master Gardener demonstration garden at Anna Smith Park. Most of the working Master Gardeners mingle with the shoppers as helpers and advisors and the rest tally, run the tills, and help haul plants to the vehicles (and keep our volunteers fed and watered). Two volunteers gather and store over 300 shallow boxes for our sale.

Plans start in again for Plant Sale in 2012—after a breather!

Approx. 50 seats are available for conference dinners Thursday and Friday nights!

The poster features a photograph of a beach scene with sand dunes, ocean grass, and a deck chair. Overlaid text includes:

- MASTER GARDENER FOUNDATION OF WASHINGTON STATE & WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION PRESENT
- Beach Class 2011
- MASTER GARDENER Advanced-Education Conference in Ocean Shores
- Sept. 22-24  
Ocean Shores Conference Center  
Ocean Shores, WA
- Keynote Speaker: Amy Stewart
- Contact:  
Don Tapio, WSU Extension Educator  
Phone: 360.482.2934 • Email: [tapiod@wsu.edu](mailto:tapiod@wsu.edu)
- WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION  
Master Gardener Program

Register for \$175 Through August 14—  
\$200 Late Registration Begins August 15.

<http://www.regonline.com/mgfbeach2011>

- ◆ Meet new friends from across Washington or reacquaint with old friends you haven't seen since last September's conference in Vancouver.
- ◆ There will be 29 seminars from which to choose, all led by experts in their fields.
- ◆ With a \$175 registration fee (through August 14), you'll be attending the full conference—eight class sessions, a box lunch on Friday, two dinners, and coffee breaks—and you'll hear the keynote speaker, Amy Stewart, author of *Wicked Bugs: The Louse that Conquered Napoleon's Army and other Diabolical Insects*, published a few months ago.

## Rousing Success for Kitsap Master Gardener Gala

*~~Arlene West, Kitsap County Master Gardener Foundation Gala Chair & Jim Rodman, Gala Committee Member*

Gosh and gee-whiz, boys and girls, let's put on a show and raise some money for a good cause! And that's just what a small army of Master Gardener Foundation of Kitsap County (MGFKC) members did on Saturday, April 9, in the beautifully decorated Marine Room of the Sons of Norway Lodge in Poulsbo, as they presented the second-ever Gala and Auction to benefit the Master Gardener Program in Kitsap County. Once the last bills were paid and the checks cashed, the net profit was a whopping \$10,956.17. All proceeds will help underwrite the clinics at farmers markets in the county, the Extension office in Bremerton and the several demonstration gardens staffed by MG volunteers, including the new food-production garden in Olalla.

Elliot Gregg, President and CEO of Kitsap Credit Union, emceed the program for the Gala. With a firm but gentle touch, he immediately commanded the room, briskly paced the audience through the afternoon's activities and shepherded his flock to a highly successful close. Guests mingled during the first hour, and checked out the 93 (!) live- and silent-auction items while nibbling an array of desserts, cheeses and fruits. Music by the Duncan Creek String Quartet – our Foundation President Mary-Cathern Edwards at the cello – soothed and mellowed and delighted all 175 attendees. Elliot then introduced Colleen Miko, Kitsap Extension's new Horticulture Coordinator, who played cheerleader for all the Master Gardener volunteers, emphasizing their numerous contributions to the community, from plant resource clinics to fresh produce for our food banks.

It was then time for the live auction, masterfully managed by Stokes auctioneer Chris Sizemore working hand-at-checkbook with Elliot. Chris talks faster than we can hear, and with wit and humor he energized and entertained the audience, while wheedling his way into wallets and purses. Credit cards were tickled, large-denomination bills were liberated, and through it all, the audience smiled and laughed in pleasure as they smashed their piggy banks at his feet. It was fun!

After a brief break and last-minute bidding on the incredible array of silent-auction items, Elliot introduced our guest speaker, Dan Hinkley, of Heronswood fame. Dan is an author, horticulturist, plant explorer and adventurous gardener, who proceeded to re-awaken the audience's appreciation for texture, motion, and fragrance, those sometimes "forgotten elements of garden design." With video and sound accompaniment and considerable humor and insight, Dan lived up to his reputation for entralling and educating his listeners.

It takes an army of dedicated, hard-working, imaginative, clever and persevering souls to put on a show this engaging and successful. Planning started in September 2010 with a core group of 10-12 members, including several veterans of the MGFKC's first Gala and Auction held in 2009. Committees were formed to choose a venue, find a caterer (we ended up purchasing wholesale and catering ourselves), arrange for speaker and auctioneer, design the setting and decorations, solicit auction donations, advertise and mail invitations. We received discounts on a number of significant items, testifying to the goodwill with which the Master Gardener program is regarded in the community. It all came together in elegant conviviality on a cool, overcast Saturday, mercifully without rain.

Will there be another Gala in Kitsap's future? Stay tuned.

Master Gardener Foundation of Kitsap County



A 501.c.3 non-profit charity

Presents

**"GIVING THROUGH GARDENING"**

Gala Fundraiser & Auction

To Benefit the Master Gardener Program and Food Production

Gardens which provide fresh produce to our local area food banks



Tickets \$40.00 per person, available at

<http://www.kitsapgardens.org> or by

e-mail at [givingthroughgardening@hotmail.com](mailto:givingthroughgardening@hotmail.com)

Saturday, April 9, 2011 – 2-5 pm

Sons of Norway Lodge, 18891 Front Street NE,

Poulsbo (free parking in nearby city lots)

Guest Speaker: Dan Hinkley of Heronswood Fame

*"The Forgotten Elements of Garden Design"*

LIVE AND SILENT AUCTION by Stokes Auction

MUSIC: DUNCAN CREEK STRING QUARTET

Dessert Buffet, Fruit, Coffee & Tea included;

No-host Bar with Beer, Wine, Spirits

For information: Gala Chair, Arlene West (360) 613-2990

### A Special Thank You

*The Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State wishes to express gratitude and appreciation to the Terra Tillers Garden Club, Kirkland, WA, for its donation during this quarter.*

## Parkway Elementary School Celebrates with a Garden Party

~~~Deloris Jungert-Davisson, MGFWS Board Representative, Asotin County



*Photo by David Denham*  
Fourth- and fifth-grade students celebrate the success of the Asotin County Master Gardeners' "Sustainable Kids' Sustainable Garden" project in early June at Parkway Elementary School in Clarkston.

On June 3, 2011, Dr. Michael Rooney, a well-known local oncology/hematology physician and strong supporter of our "Sustainable Kids' Sustainable Garden" project, joined fourth- and fifth-grade students at Parkway Elementary School in Clarkston, Washington, as they celebrated the end of a project that helped them focus on nutrition and exercise. He quizzed the students about the benefits of healthy diets, the joys of growing and eating vegetables and fruits from organic school garden the students created and the importance of community involvement in healthy communities.

It all began last fall when the King County Master Gardener Foundation awarded their Ellen A'Key grant to Master Gardeners in Asotin County for their "Sustainable Kids' Sustainable Garden" proposal. The project was conceived as a small-change response to the alarming rise in youth obesity and nutritionally related diseases. Parkway Elementary School was selected as the project site, because a high percentage of students receive free and reduced-price lunches. Forty-two percent of the students qualify for free lunches (compared to 32% statewide); and 23 percent qualify for reduced-price lunches (compared to ten percent statewide).

Asotin County Master Gardeners developed the curriculum for their weekly classes with these objectives:

- To involve students in hands-on activities both in the classroom and in the garden. Master Gardeners used science-based education they received from Master Gardener training, as well as their work experience as Master Gardeners;
- To model small changes in health habits, focusing on nutrition and exercise;
- To relate science to everyday life and health; and
- To design and plant a school vegetable garden in raised beds, along with a new orchard, raspberry patch and grape arbor for use as a real-world laboratory.

Project members followed the Washington state curriculum for fourth- and fifth-grade science, which entailed utilizing:

1. System thinking: focusing on systems, sub-systems and their component parts, e.g., the garden system and its relationship to the food we eat.
2. Inquiry: knowledge of how the natural world works, asking questions and evaluating the answers;
3. Application: designing solutions to problems. Master Gardeners addressed the relationship between healthy gardens, making healthier food choices and increased physical activity. We modeled making small changes in the children's snacks. We served the classes healthy snacks in small portions, and we offered what was, for most students, brand-new tastes, such as edible pea pods and soy beans.

Fifth-grade students are required to describe the steps in a scientific experiment in the annual state science testing. Teachers and Master Gardeners had familiarized the students with the steps in science experiments. Fifth-grade teachers reported our many scientific experiments in the project classes helped the students to become quite comfortable with the state test.

Students told us that the very best part of the project was the hands-on implementation of the knowledge base. What the *Lewiston Tribune* said about our project in an April 29, 2011, article about our project was right: kids love working with dirt, with an emphasis on "working" and "dirt"! Both the students and Master Gardeners discovered interrelations among the system components as we planned, planted, experimented, maintained, harvested and tasted the crops in the Parkway School Garden.

We practiced trying healthier snack foods with smaller portions. Students looked forward to their snacks during every garden class. Many students have lunch at 11:00 a.m., so by 2:00 p.m., they are hungry and will eat just about anything. The first question students asked the Master Gardeners upon arriving in the classroom was, "What's for treats, today?" Several days we made a dip for the vegetables from a little ranch dressing and lots of buttermilk. The students eagerly dipped their vegetables and ate them. Having "treats" during class, even if it was spinach, was a change from a regular class lesson. And as unbelievable as it may sound, the students really did answer that their favorite food was spinach. (The ranch dressing didn't hurt.)

*(Continued on page 9)*

(Continued from page 8)

As a school garden needs maintenance during the summer, Asotin County Master Gardeners arranged for students to compete for summer maintenance jobs by setting up a science experiment in the state test format, explaining why they would be good at the summer job. Those selected meet every Tuesday evening to maintain the compost bins, weed and thin the gardens, water the trees and raspberries and practice documenting their work.



Photo courtesy of Deloris Jungert-Davison  
Lewiston Tribune article about the Asotin County Master Gardeners' Ellen A'Key project.

The Asotin County Healthy Communities Coalition adopted our project as their major focus on youth and health. The Clarkston Community Garden built our raised vegetable beds.



Photo by David Denham  
Parkway Elementary School students and Asotin County Master Gardeners plant their "Sustainable Kids' Sustainable Garden" in Clarkston.

In addition, Patt's Valley Garden Center delivered a ton of soil for the beds and discounted the supplies we bought from them. The Asotin Garfield Community Network granted us \$2,000 to assist with our program and Tri-State Outfitters gave us garden tools and other equipment.

The title of the project, "Sustainable Kids' Sustainable Garden" begs the question about the project's sustainability. The general health of our youth today is compromised by habits which do not promote future health and well-being. Thirty percent of residents in Asotin County are obese. Systems cannot change overnight. We believed one place to start was with education. Our project dealt with small changes in food nutrition and production which could provide long-range solutions to the obesity problem.

We plan to continue the program with support from the members of the Asotin County Healthy Communities Coalition, the school and local parents. We have given reports to the local school board and the Healthy Communities Coalition, which represents about 30 various organizations in the valley. Several organizations have suggested we "grow" the program in other city schools. As the project runs through the summer, our small number (20) of

Asotin County Master Gardeners have not yet conducted a final evaluation or made a decision about the form the program may take in the coming year. Change involves social, economic and physical decisions. We have planted a few seeds.

**Editor: MGFWS Executive Committee**

Publisher: Mary Shane

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| Officer               | Name                | County          | Email Address  |
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| VP Northwest          | Jane Billinghurst   | Skagit          | <a href="mailto:pjaneb_hurst@hotmail.com">pjaneb_hurst@hotmail.com</a>     |
| VP Southwest          | Vacant              |                 |  |
| VP Metro              | Betty Ryan          | Pierce          | <a href="mailto:honeyryan@msn.com">honeyryan@msn.com</a>                   |
| VP Northeast          | Vacant              |                 |  |
| VP Southeast          | Chris Bailey        | Benton-Franklin | <a href="mailto:mastergardenerwa@yahoo.com">mastergardenerwa@yahoo.com</a> |
| WSU MG Program Leader | Tonie Fitzgerald    | WSU             | <a href="mailto:tjfitz@wsu.edu">tjfitz@wsu.edu</a>                         |

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tained the crowd with stories of the very early days of Master Gardener involvement. The ceremony ended with a ribbon cutting and the unveiling of the garden's main entrance sign. Cake and lemonade were served.

We were blessed with a beautiful day and a wonderful turnout of people to share this special day with us. Among special guests attending were WSU Pierce County Master Gardener Coordinator Nicole Martini, Steve Wamback, Pierce County Solid Waste Administer, all of the PenMet Parks commissioners and park staff, many Master Gardeners and members of the public.



*Photo by Tom Larson*

Ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new Gig Harbor Master Gardener demonstration garden in June.

I will say that it was challenging to open a new garden in this economic climate. The main key to our success was in networking and forming partnerships with other groups. Not only did a large part of our initial funding come from a grant program sponsored by PenMet Parks, we also received help in the form of hundreds of volunteer hours from the Rotary Club of Gig Harbor. The men from Rotary built our beautiful garden shed. The garden also benefited from an Eagle Scout project. The boys cleared invasive plants, spread mulch on trails and built and installed bat houses.

The Master Gardeners who work at Sehmel Homestead Park have two different areas of responsibility. We have the traditional demonstration garden, and we also have a wooded native- plant walk with interpretive signage. The demonstration garden opened with eight cedar raised beds, a three-bin compost system and many containers. Future plans include the installation of a greenhouse, a knot garden and other composting ideas. A garden, by definition, is not a static thing, but living and growing. We look forward to visitors coming out to watch us grow.



*Photo by Mary Shane  
Garden of Dolores Cavanah, Grays Harbor County*

## Is There News From Your Master Gardener Program?

The *Seeds for Thought* newsletter offers all county WSU Master Gardener programs and foundations an excellent way to publicize your projects and events. Working with your county's representative to the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State or with a member of your organization's leadership, send articles to Mary Shane, *Seeds for Thought* publisher, ([meshane@comcast.net](mailto:meshane@comcast.net)) according to the following schedule:

| Articles Due to Publisher by: | For Publication on: |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| January 1                     | February 1          |
| April 1                       | May 1               |
| July 1                        | August 1            |
| September 1                   | October 1           |