



# Seeds for Thought

February 2013

Volume 14, Issue 1

A newsletter from the  
Master Gardener  
Foundation of  
Washington State

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Brown Marmorated Stink Bug  
(*Halyomorpha halys*)

This is a new, highly destructive invasive species to the United States.

Nameplate photo

Courtesy of

David R. Lance, USDA, APHIS, PPQ  
and Bugwood.org

Visit our Web site:

<http://mastergardener.wsu.edu/mgfws/>



Watch this YouTube  
Invitation to the  
2013 International  
Master Gardener  
Conference

<http://youtu.be/iunAhQqTeUU>



## A Winter's Bloom

See photo essay by James Worgull

## From the President

—Chris Bailey, MGFWS President

The new year is upon us and I'm sure your mailboxes (like mine) are filling with seed catalogs offering lots of tempting choices for spring gardens. I have a list of "must haves," and I'm going to try to stick to those items and not get carried away once again.

Speaking of growing, this year marks the 40th anniversary of the Master Gardener Program in Washington state, and we will celebrate at our annual conference in September, in Everett. Don't forget to mark your calendars for September 26-28, 2013. The conference will have 38 different sessions; half will be diagnostic, and half will be devoted to food production and leadership.

Last November, I attended a tomato-grafting class taught by Carol Ann Miles, Ph.D., WSU Associate Professor/Associate Scientist, Vegetable Horticulture, in Mt. Vernon. I thought I was getting in on a new concept, but, as Carol pointed out, vegetable grafting has been going on for centuries in other parts of the world.

Why graft a tomato plant, you ask. Well, because you can select rootstock that is resistant to soil problems that you encounter in your garden, e.g., verticillium, nematodes, fusarium, or salinity. Then, you can graft a scion on top of the resistant rootstock that will produce a tomato with qualities you want; e.g., great taste, high yield. This procedure works for other vegetables as well, and Carol has been busy working with farmers who grow eggplant and watermelons.

She chose tomatoes for our class, because they are the easiest to graft. Now that grafting is emerging in the United States, I would encourage other Master Gardeners to become knowledgeable about the procedure. To learn more, go to <http://agsyst.wsu.edu/graftingVegetables.html>.

Volunteers are not paid – not because they're useless – but because they're priceless. ■



Don Bailey



# *Growing Up* FRUITFUL FANTASIES

By Kathleen M.L. Eaton, Ph.D., Snohomish County Master Gardener;

Photos by Richelle Taylor

**P**umpkins don't grow in trees . . . except at Rob and Richelle Taylor's place. That's right—they used to grow pumpkin vines laced among the limbs of fir and deciduous trees to delight their grandchildren. They had other reasons, too. They love gardening and needed more space. There was no place to go but up.

The couple shared the Snohomish County Master Gardener of the Year title in 2010, earning the honor with their multidimensional talents. Richelle's photography throughout this article will show off Rob's handiwork in vertical gardening. When he saw Rob's building talents, Gordy Nueman, a long-standing Snohomish County Master Gardener, recognized Rob as a valuable recruit for the Snohomish Master Gardener Demonstration gardens. Both attended one of local horticulturist Scott Conner's classes at Sunnyside Nursery, in Marysville.

After attending Conner's class, Rob looked around for building materials. As in most Master Gardener programs, there wasn't a whole lot of cash lying around. Soon he was envisioning vertical gardens made from non-traditional materials.

The first structure he built was a lettuce wall for the Snohomish County Master Gardeners' Jennings Park Garden, a demonstration garden from which 3,000 pounds of produce was donated to the Marysville Food Bank last year. Every square foot is valuable. The lettuce wall takes up four square feet in a nar-

row, 1x4-foot configuration. It's four feet high with space for 36 heads of lettuce to grow on each side. That's 72 heads of lettuce.

Rob used lattice to define compartments. Tarps on both surfaces hold soil between the lattice. Perforated pipes for irrigation are placed within the soil, compost and organic fertilizer. Once fully assembled and filled, X's are slashed in the tarp, from which lettuce plants sprout, seeking their share of sunlight. Harvesting is also easy on the back.

That was in 2009, now Rob has the whole northeast corner of Jennings Park filled with various vertical-gardening techniques. Mondays are food-bank harvest days. It is typical for last-minute goodies to emerge from that corner, to the surprise of Michelle Duncan and Janice Tallman, who are charged with running the garden. One or the other will typically say something like, "Where'd these come from?" The answer is always, "Rob grows them over there somewhere." He really does pack it in.

Trellises of all types are useful, but are only a beginning. They can go almost anywhere and be made out of many things. Hog wire, however, has proven to be strong and versatile. Rob has used 16 feet by 52 inches to shape into a large tunnel for growing vines and runners. (It is so beautiful it could be used for a wedding.) The best plants for these are scarlet runner beans or spaghetti squash. When they become lushly grown, they can also



serve as a cover for a shade garden. In winter, cover with plastic and use them as a greenhouse.

Other vertical favorites are delicata squash, Japanese and lemon cucumbers, all types of beans and peas, Italian squash and gourds. Pumpkins for pies are good in vertical plantings, and you can even use seeds saved from last year's Halloween pumpkins for this year's Jack o'Lanterns. Potatoes, strawberries and lettuce fill in foliage near the bottom with good fruit production.

How can heavy squash and pumpkins be supported? You might be surprised. The vines become stronger as the fruit grows, and substantial support is lent by leverage on the wire or bamboo in the trellis or a crook in a tree. As you watch your garden grow, there may be the occasional need to support a larger squash with an old nylon stocking.

More complex structures Rob has designed use many levels to grow. One with which he is particularly pleased was inspired by a grocery bin. It's built on an angle, back to the front. There are drainage holes only at the bottom front. The bin has shorter veggies inside and is placed in front of a hog-wire fence. Hills of delicata or similar squash are planted below it at the back so they can be trained up the fence. Chains hang from the bottom front near the drainage holes teasing up climbing beans. Now that's bang for your buck! The footprint is approximately two by three feet and the box is easily accessible at waist level.

Another extremely narrow garden was made using old gutters and wood trim. This structure has several levels. Even the side supports were productive towers, with perforated pipes filled with soil and compost. Strawberry vines flowed freely from them.

At the corner of the more traditional garden, Rob captured the space of a single post and turned it into a columnar garden. This one was made from narrow strips of wood pieced together with holes cut out. It was filled with soil and compost. Squash grew at the bottom, where the plants had ground support; strawberries flowed from aperture to aperture, runners producing new plants for next year. A lovely flowering plant graced the top. A



four-to-six-inch PVC pipe with drainage holes could accomplish the same thing in a heartbeat.

Rob discourages using tires. They change the taste of things. His philosophy is to use what you can find. Be creative; don't spend money if you don't have to. But if you have the funds, buy cedar because it's light and withstands the weather. Want a hanging tomato garden? Buy a utility bucket for a few dollars; punch in some drainage holes; fill, plant and hang it. It helps to plant a sacrificial lettuce plant on top. When it wilts, water the planter. You don't need one of the fancy irrigation systems.

Now is the perfect time to start planning your garden on paper, with your seed catalogs, and to exchange seeds with gardening friends. This year, sketch a new vertical structure or two. Then start looking for building materials.

Maybe Charlie Brown should have been waiting for the Great Pumpkin next to a tree! ■

For a collection of additional vertical-gardening photos, click here: <https://plus.google.com/photos/108233244177660554725/albums/5830142333681537649>.

## ISLAND COUNTY

# A Drainfield Landscape Test

**T**he idea for this project was born in the summer of 2009 during a conversation with Judy Feldman, then-Acting Director with Island County WSU Extension. After a preliminary search of the available literature seemed to indicate that the plants recommended for growing on drainfields were only assumed to have non-invasive roots, we decided to investigate if there would be an interest in a project to actually test plants on mock drainfields. We contacted Joe Laxson, the Island County Health Department official who educates the public about their systems and the new testing regulations, along with Janet Hall, WSU Waste Wise Coordinator, and Dr. Carol Miles, Associate Professor/Associate Scientist, Vegetable Horticulture, WSU Mt. Vernon NW Research and Extension Center, to assess their interest. The response was enthusiastic support.

The Island County Master Gardener Drainfield Landscape Test Project finally started two years later, in August 2012. The in-ground and mound drainfields were installed in August and planting was almost completed in October. Remaining construction in 2012 was electrical work and installation of the fertilizer injector. We landscaped around the test area to make it more attractive, including walkways, and plans are to install detailed signage this year. We have a record-keeper to maintain a list of what has been planted and where and how it grows/dies over the three-year test period. She will also include weather conditions. We have planted the same plants in each strip on each drainfield type, and the plants are labeled. At the end of the three-year period we will dig out the plants and measure their roots. We are looking for plants that do not have roots deeper than 6"-10" in order not to compromise the drainfield.

We are presently testing:

- Native plants: kinnikinnick, beach strawberry, salal, camas, Oregon grape, fescue lawn grass;
- Clumping grasses: blue oat, orange sedge, purple moor, tufted hair, blue fescue;
- Perennials: catmint, cushion spurge, evergreen creeping raspberry, lavender, daylily, rhododendron;
- Succulents: various ground cover types.

Our objective is to develop brochures based on our field test that will advise Island County residents what to plant or not plant on their in-ground or mound drainfields. These brochures will be distributed to the Island County Health and Planning Departments, drainfield installers and nurseries. ■

by Marcia Nelson,  
Island County Master Gardener



Freshly planted inground-type drainfield



Fully planted inground-type drainfield



Mound-type drainfield halfway planted

## KITTITAS COUNTY

# Healthy Garden—Healthy Kids

**B**right Beginnings for Kittitas County houses the Head Start and Early Head Start programs for Kittitas County. They have a new facility located on nearly five acres. Although there was plenty of space, there was no funding for a garden. Thanks to some dedicated volunteers, donations and the sponsorship and help of the local WSU Master Gardeners, the Bright Beginnings organic-vegetable garden was started and had a successful first year.

The garden has 13 cedar raised beds of various heights and six fruit trees. There are low beds for strawberries, medium-height beds for vegetables, and high beds for herbs and for easy access for children in wheelchairs. The kids grew broccoli, lettuce, spinach, onions, carrots, radishes, zucchini, cabbage, bok choy, kale, tomatoes, green beans and pumpkins. They enjoyed the smells of chives, cilantro, thyme, basil and various mints (one boy said they all smelled like bubble gum), and watched the sunflowers grow taller and taller.

The strawberry plants were planted upside down, backwards and sideways, but thrived and filled their 4x8 beds by the end of the summer, with the prospect of a great crop of strawberries next year. Last fall there was a pumpkin for each classroom, and seeds to harvest from broccoli and green beans. Parents and volunteers helped to maintain the garden all summer. The kitchen used wonderful vegetables all summer and fall for nutritious meals and snacks. Best of all, this was a terrific educational experience for the kids: planting, observing, harvesting, and enjoying their vegetables. ■

by Beverly Dale-Crunk,  
Kittitas County Master Gardener



July Garden



September Garden

Photos by Beverly Dale-Crunk



Photo courtesy of James Worgul

## 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* managing editor, ([meshane@comcast.net](mailto:meshane@comcast.net)) according to the following schedule:

### ARTICLES DUE:

January 1  
April 1  
July 1  
October 1

### FOR PUBLICATION:

February 1  
May 1  
August 1  
November 1

## SKAGIT COUNTY

# Ta-Da! Master Gardeners on Facebook

**M**aster Gardeners are fearlessly entering the world of social media with a number of counties launching Facebook pages.

In Skagit County, we launched our page in June 2011. Its purpose is to give the public research-based information relevant to home gardeners in Skagit County while increasing the profile of our Master Gardener program. Two Master Gardener volunteers administer the page, along with a member of staff at our local WSU Extension office and our Master Gardener coordinator. We post once or twice a day and have about 150 'Likes.'

We comment on seasonally appropriate subjects and provide links to WSU Extension sites, other university sites, or sites with a reputation for reliable gardening information. Our December posts included how to care for poinsettias, when to plant garlic, and why holly is not a good choice for the Pacific Northwest. We strive to keep the content informative and the tone light.

To promote our program, we post information about workshops, provide links to articles we write for the local paper, and include photographs of Master Gardeners hard at work in our demonstration garden. We also 'Share' selected posts from other WSU Extension Master Gardener Facebook pages and 'Like' all the other WSU Extension Master Gardener pages we can find. And every once in a while, we throw in something just for fun—Victorian ideas about plant names or a photograph of a heart-shaped pollen pattern in one of the sunflowers in our children's garden.

As Facebook is an interactive medium, we allow comments and reply within a day or two. If a detailed reply is required, we refer the questioner to an article or fact sheet, or suggest the person call or visit one of our plant clinics. We monitor the page every 24 hours to make sure no nefarious characters sneak on,

and we have had to remove about four spam-type posts in the past 18 months.

For those of you interested in more information, at the 2012 Advanced-Education Conference in Pasco, Brigitta Jozefowski, then-assistant to statewide WSU Extension Master Gardener Program Leader Tonie Fitzgerald, took us through WSU Extension's social-media policy. Her handout can be found at <http://mastergardener.wsu.edu/mgfws/advtraining.htm>.

Facebook is a cost-effective way for Master Gardeners to expand public outreach, especially to those who welcome digital interaction and might not connect with us through our traditional outlets. I also find our Facebook page to be a wonderful archive of interesting articles. I know if I scour our links, I'll come across something packed full of useful information for whatever garden task is currently at hand.

Facebook is not for everyone, but it can be great fun. If you are tech savvy, why don't you check to see if your county has a Facebook presence that you can recommend to gardeners in your community? ■

by Jane Billinghamurst,  
Skagit County Master Gardener



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### Seeds for Thought is a quarterly publication of the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State (MGFWS)

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# Are You Covered?

**A**s Master Gardeners, we probably think that we are protected by WSU from "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." So, are we protected? When? For what? If we are not protected by WSU, does our foundation (or association) protect us? I'm not a lawyer, and this short article can hardly be complete or without error, but perhaps it will generate discussion on these topics.

The need for legal protection as a WSU Master Gardener is vanishingly rare. We are a pretty cautious and mutually respectful lot, so people just don't get hurt or feel hurt very often. That being said, people do sometimes get hurt, and our world is increasingly litigious. Our community of like-minded gardeners and community educators operates on good faith, and as part of that good faith we should know just how far WSU and our foundations might go in "the worst case."

What is the worst case?

1. You might be injured or become sick.
2. You might be sued for something you did or said (or omitted to do or say).

When am I covered by WSU?

First, it depends on whether "the worst case" arose from a WSU activity or not. Each county's WSU Extension Director determines what qualifies as a WSU activity in that county.

- Plant clinic, workshops, educational tours, staffing informational booths and other science-based educational activities are examples that are sanctioned by WSU.
- Foundation activities that are not sanctioned might include foundation meetings and fundraisers with no educational components.

Look to your Master Gardener Program Coordinator or Extension County Director to learn what qualifies in your county.

Foundation activities that are not WSU-sanctioned may still be done; however, they should be explicitly identified as NOT being WSU Master Gardener activities. This is—among other reasons—so that Master Gardeners volunteering for or participating in these non-WSU activities know that they are NOT covered by the WSU protections. Each person may then determine for him or herself whether they accept the risks and have adequate personal protections.

## Liability Waiver for Non-WSU Volunteers

**W**ashington State University requires an "assumption of risk" form whenever WSU Extension Master Gardeners have non-WSU volunteers helping at a Master Gardener event or activity.

This is not for clientele who are attending an event, but rather for people, such as family members or friends, who are helping Master Gardeners at an event.

The WSU liability waiver is not appropriate for anyone who would be covered by Labor and Industries, and should not be signed by a current authorized WSU volunteer or employee. ■

Second, it depends on whether you are a "Covered WSU Master Gardener." According to the WSU Master Gardener Volunteer Handbook, for purposes of WSU liability and injury or illness coverage, you are a Covered WSU Master Gardener if you are, at the time of the incident:

1. Currently enrolled in the WSU Extension Master Gardener program, (current pest agreement, annual renewal, etc.);
2. Complying with WSU Extension Master Gardener guidelines, WSU policies, and the law;
3. Engaged in an activity that is planned, approved and carried out through WSU Extension;
4. Reporting the dates and times of WSU Extension volunteer activities on a monthly basis; and
5. Acting within the scope of your duties.

## What coverage is provided by WSU?

*Injury or illness:* if you meet all the requirements to be considered a Covered WSU Master Gardener at the time of your injury or illness you may be eligible for workers' compensation coverage through the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) for injuries/illness resulting from WSU volunteer activities. L&I coverage may include hospital, physician's care, prescriptions, ambulance, and other associated costs, but not loss of income.

*Liability to suit:* A suit or claim may be valid or it may be baseless, but either way it must be addressed. If it arises from acts or omissions as a Covered WSU Master Gardener, then you are indemnified against claims by WSU. To indemnify means to guarantee against a loss, so that means WSU will defend you and pay any penalty a court says you must pay.

WSU excludes acts or omissions that are:

1. Committed with willful intent to cause injury or harm, or reckless or malicious in nature.
2. In willful violation of law or WSU regulations or policies.
3. Committed while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance.

## When am I covered by my foundation?

Foundations are legally separate from WSU, so WSU insurance does not cover foundation activities unless the activity is also considered a WSU activity.

*Injury or illness:* If you are not considered a "Covered WSU Master Gardener" at the time of your injury or illness, then you must look to other insurance or resources. As a foundation volunteer, you will most likely not be covered by your foundation's commercial general liability insurance, which usually provides limited coverage for personal injury and medical expenses, but only for the public, and not for volunteers.

*Liability to suit:* If you are not considered a "Covered WSU Master Gardener" at the time of a suit that arises from acts or omissions tied to a foundation activity that is not sanctioned by WSU, then you are not indemnified against claims by WSU. Furthermore, you are also not indemnified by the foundation, unless you are a director or officer, and then only when acting in that capacity.

### **What coverage is provided for directors and officers?**

Foundation rules, such as Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws, often include clauses indemnifying directors and officers substantially as follows:

Officers and directors shall be indemnified by the Foundation for their conduct as officers or directors, except for acts or omissions that involve intentional misconduct or knowing violation of law by an officer or director or any transaction from which the officer or director will personally receive a benefit in money, property or services to which the officer or director is not legally entitled.

Remember, "to indemnify" means to guarantee against a loss, so that means the foundation is promising to defend you and pay any penalty a court says you must pay, within the limitations of the clause (and within the limitations of the foundation's ability to pay.) Considering the limited financial resources of most foundations, such a promise may be pretty empty.

Some foundations have purchased "Directors and Officers Insurance." D&O Insurance is a commercial product that is purchased by a diverse range of organizations from huge for-profit corporations to small 501(c)(3) foundations. It says, to grossly oversimplify, that if any insured person is sued asserting a wrongful act and claiming damages, the insurance company will organize and carry out the legal defense and will pay any loss. All these terms have specific legal definitions, and the insurance policy has exclusions and limitations, including the time periods within which a claim may be made or a wrongful act has occurred.

The annual premium, which may be somewhere in the range of \$500 to \$1,000, will depend on things like whether the organization has employees and what kinds of risks it undertakes.

First, employee-related wrongful acts seem by far the largest category of risk. Of course, a volunteer may sue asserting an employment practices wrongful act even though he or she is not an employee. Whether the court eventually assesses a penalty or throws out the case, legal fees can be significant.

Second, what risky behaviors are within your mission? Do you decide where large sums of money will be spent? Do you lead groups through dangerous countryside in search of rare and beautiful plants? Do you conduct candid (i.e., potentially libelous) discussions on Facebook? Do you carpool to Seattle for the big garden show? Greater risk results in higher premiums.

Another consideration: how deep are your pockets? This goes two ways. Deep pockets, i.e., lots of financial resources, means you have more to lose. Shallow pockets, i.e., few bucks, means your organization might face ruinous expenses just to defend against a baseless charge.

### **Conclusions**

To volunteer is to give of one's self—time, ability, effort and the expense of providing that effort, including costs in the background such as our own insurance.

It would be too easy, and too wrong, for a Master Gardener to assume that everything she or he does as a Master Gardener falls under a protective WSU umbrella. A foundation could suffer from the same mistaken assumption.

Each person and organization should research these topics until they are comfortable with the balance between their perceived risks, both organizationally and personally, and an accurate picture of their personal and organizational coverage.



by Mark Clark,  
Jefferson County Master Gardener

Save the date for the 2013 King County

# Master Gardener Plant Sale

Preview Friday May 3, 2013 • Sale Sat-Sun May 4-5



mgfkc.org

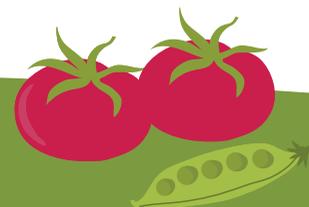
Support the King County  
Master Gardener Program

Proceeds benefit community outreach,  
stewardship & public education



- **Tons of Tomatoes** ...and veggie starts, herbs, perennials, natives, shrubs, trees and vines
- **Personal Plant Pickers**...Master Gardeners on hand to help you shop
- **Plenty of Free Parking**...Free, easy-access parking and shuttle service
- **Plant Problems?**...Show up with a sample and Master Gardeners will help to find a solution

Located at the UW Center for Urban Horticulture  
3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle (near University Village shopping center)



Visit [mgfkc.org](http://mgfkc.org) for more details

Like "Master Gardener Foundation of King County" on Facebook

WSU and  
Spokane County Master Gardeners  
present

## Cabin Fever Gardening Symposium



A Winter Cure for Gardeners

**\$65 Registration includes...**

- Parking
- Continental Breakfast
- Choice of 4 Gardening Classes
- Catered Lunch

**February 18, 2013**

7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Join us for this premier event, where gardeners of all abilities will have the opportunity to pick up some mid-winter gardening classes, as well as combat the doldrums of winter.

Registration forms are available at

<http://www.spokane-county.wsu.edu/spokane/eastside/>  
online registration at <http://www.mgfsc.org/>.

Each attendee will be able to choose four classes to attend - with two morning sessions and two afternoon sessions full of interesting and informative gardening subjects.

Registration also includes a continental breakfast and a nice catered lunch. We will have door prizes, publications for sale and plenty of Master Gardeners on hand to answer questions.

This event will be held downtown on the lovely WSU Spokane Riverpoint Campus, in the classrooms and auditorium of the Phase I Building.



*A Winter's Bloom*  
by James Worgull