



Seeds For Thought

November 2019 Volume 19, Issue 4

A newsletter of the
Master Gardener
Foundation of
Washington State

From the President

~~Don Enstrom, MGFWS President

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Visit our website:

MGFWS



We now have a
calendar! Please
check the [calendar](#) for
deadlines, meetings,
and events in various
counties.

Iris photo by Erin
Landon Grays Harbor
County Master
Gardener



Author of *Diary of a Mad Gardener* and *Soiled Reputations* David Hobson wrote: “I grow plants for many reasons: to please my eye or to please my soul, to challenge the elements or to challenge my patience, for novelty or for nostalgia, but mostly for the joy in seeing them grow.” As Master Gardeners, we share our joy of gardening through teaching classes and gamely diagnosing disease, infestation, nutrition, cultural, and environmental problems. Our MG skills are a combination of our initial training, our lifetimes of

experience, WSU Extension staff’s support, our continuing education, and our sharing of knowledge amongst ourselves. It is the last two that our state foundation is focused on, with most of our recent attention focused on our annual Advanced Education Conference.

In the past the Advanced Education Conferences have been organized by the host county, resulting in some truly outstanding events enjoyed by hundreds of master gardeners from across the state. Organizing these events at the county level required dedicated volunteers working long hours, at times detracting from their own county programs. Several years ago we recognized that this was not a sustainable model and began a transition to state foundation organized conferences. I’m pleased to report that conference planning is going well – both in organizing the 2020 conference and in developing the foundational policies and procedures we will rely on for future conferences. Our next conference is less than a year away and there are many openings available for you to join in the fun and camaraderie of working on the conference. Of particular importance is the need for volunteers willing to identify and recruit conference sponsors and to fill other conference roles. These positions need to be filled as soon as possible – please contact me or AEC2020 Director C-J Nielsen for more information.

As the State Board members grow in strength & numbers, we’ve started to look at opportunities to support Best Practice Sharing between the County Foundations. This sharing would focus on our non-horticultural skills - suggestions include managing social media, using PowerPoint and Publisher, speaking to the public, writing articles, raising money, partnering with other Extension programs, acquisition of and effective use of technology, gaining support for county funding, establishing a county foundation public identity, getting mentioned in newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV., etc., etc.

Platforms could range from informal face-to-face or Zoom meetings to quarterly webinars. Speakers and/or panels would be drawn from volunteers and extension staff. What are your thoughts? Would this be value-added? Is this a state-wide activity you’d consider volunteering for? I look forward to hearing your thoughts ... some of these ideas may become popular Best Practice Sharing programs/topics, others may collect dust as *(Continued on [page 5](#))*

WSU Master Gardener Program Update

~~Jennifer Marquis, Statewide Program Leader



On behalf of the leadership team, I thank all of you for giving your time and expertise to the WSU Extension Master Gardener program. I look forward to seeing the results of all your hard work in the coming months as program coordinators complete their end of year reports. Your work cultivates plants, people and communities and it empowers and sustains communities with relevant, unbiased, research-based horticulture and environmental stewardship education.

In June of 2018, the WSU Master Gardener program coordinators met face to face. In that meeting, we completed a SWOT analysis to define our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. From that session, five working teams were developed to build upon our strengths, mitigate our weaknesses and capitalize on opportunities to minimize our threats.

An opportunity discussed during the meeting was the leadership structure of the program. What structure would best serve the program? A survey was launched to learn what stakeholders believed would be best. The administration listened and made a change.

Early this year, the leadership structure of the WSU Master Gardener program shifted from a single faculty lead with expertise in horticulture to a team structure. The team is comprised of a program leader with expertise in volunteer leadership and organizational management; the Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Unit Director, the County Operations and Natural Resources Director, and the Volunteer Engagement Specialist. It is my hope that this new structure makes each of you feel more supported by WSU Extension.

I am excited to share the progress of our five teams. The Telling Our Story team recently unveiled the new vision, mission, and values for the program. These statements are a result of the June 2019 face to face program coordinator meeting. Check out the statements on our website at <http://mastergardener.wsu.edu>. Please use these statements as tools to guide your everyday work as WSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers. The next step for this team is to define program priorities. WSU Master Gardener coordinators will receive a survey shortly asking them to rank the issues that are most important to address in the communities we serve.

The Quality Resources team is exploring ways to use technology to mitigate the reduction in faculty and staff available to teach the in-class portion of basic training. One idea we are exploring is using Zoom coupled with lesson kits prepared and facilitated by the onsite coordinator. Essentially, the instructor teaches via Zoom but provides the program coordinator a list of supplies and instructions on how to facilitate the hands-on portion of the training. We are also working to update online training.

The Professional development team is working on an onboarding plan for Master Gardener Coordinators. The plan will be used to train the new coordinator in Chelan/Douglas and I suspect it will be used to train the new Coordinators in King and Pierce. The team will make changes based feedback and most likely be able to share it out mid-year 2020. Progress is also being made on updating the program handbook.

The Infrastructure Development team is still researching volunteer management software systems. We fell a bit behind due to staffing issues in the county where the software is being piloted. However, we are back on track and hope to have the trial group up by the end of January and everyone in the county trained and using the system by the end of next summer. Once we have concrete information from the pilot project, we will have some basis for decision making.

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2020 Advanced Education Conference Update

~~C-J Nielsen, Conference Chair, Island County Master Gardener



The 2020 WSU Master Gardener Advanced Education Conference will offer a broad range of continuing education classes for Master Gardeners and is presented by the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State. The Conference will be held at Fort Worden Conference Center a historic gathering place nestled in the seaport community of Port Townsend, Washington on the Olympic Peninsula. Just two hours from Seattle, it's an easy, scenic journey to this unforgettable destination.

Select from over 30 Classes on topics from Garden Mastery and Home Food Production to Master Gardener Skills and Garden Maintenance and Sustainability. Highlights include a plenary panel on Climate Change and the Gardener, and another plenary on the Master Gardener...from Here into the Future. Master Gardener registrants will be able to record up to 9.5 hours of Continuing Education (CE) credits for classes and plenary sessions, and enjoy a selection of custom-designed optional Tours for additional CE. The Conference will offer a vibrant Marketplace, networking social time and great meals in a beautiful setting!

Featured banquet keynote speaker is Ron Gagliardo, Sr. Manager, Horticultural Services, amazon.com. In 2018, Amazon opened The Spheres in Seattle, the result of innovative thinking about the character of the workplace and an extended conversation about what is typically missing from the urban office environment - a direct link to nature. "Year Five on Day One: Growing the Amazon Spheres" is his story of the design, building, technological advances and diverse plant collection from around the world.

Great lodging options. Stay on campus at Fort Worden in a signature Officers Row house, book an RV slot at Fort Worden State Park or enjoy a stay at one of Port Townsend's signature historic hotels. Full information on lodging options and a look at the full class schedule will be available on the Conference website at mglearns.org late this Fall. Watch for lodging reservations opening January 1 and Early Registration opening on April 1, 2020.

Plan now to join Master Gardeners from across Washington State in beautiful Port Townsend, WA to learn the latest in gardening techniques and discoveries, refresh your gardening know-how, and grow your own skills to help other gardeners be successful.

**YEAR FIVE ON DAY ONE:
GROWING THE AMAZON SPHERES**

We're pleased to announce our banquet keynote speaker, **Ron Gagliardo**, Senior Manager, Horticultural Services, Amazon.com.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Program Announced Fall 2019
- Camp/RV Reservations in Fort Worden State Park Open 1/2/20
- On-Site Lodging Reservations Open 1/1/20
- **Early Registration Opens 4/1/20**
- Early Registration ends 6/30/20

Find more information at www.mglearns.org

**2020 WSU Master Gardener
ADVANCED
EDUCATION
Conference**

Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State

LEARN. GROW. CONNECT.
October 1-3, 2020

Washington State University
EXTENSION
Master Gardener Program

Washington State University
EXTENSION
Master Gardener Foundation

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

Oh Deer!

~~Alice Slusher, Cowlitz County Master Gardener

When we first moved to our rural home in the PNW, we were thrilled to watch the deer amble along their footpaths across our property. However, my love affair with deer ended when we returned home from an extended vacation and discovered that every one of the arborvitae in the hedge my husband planted was severely “sculpted” by my former friends. It’s still a love-hate relationship with them—we share the land with them, but really wish they’d eat something other than what we plant! Here are some tips from experts.



Image by [Eveline de Bruin](#) from [Pixabay](#)

What doesn’t work? Old wives tales persist about coyote (or human) urine, sulfur, human hair, animal pooh, and my favorite, Irish Spring soap. “Ultrasonic” devices are a complete waste of money. Even dangling pie pans or other moving noisemakers may work for a while, but become ineffective when deer get used to them. Mothballs may work briefly, but are extremely toxic to humans and wildlife, as well as being illegal to use.

So what works?

Exclusion! The only deer-proof plant is behind a sturdy 7-8 foot fence. Remember—deer would rather climb under a fence than jump over it, so make sure the bottom of the fence is secure. Electric fences work well, but again, not always practical.

Here’s an interesting fact: Deer don’t like crowded spaces where a safe landing isn’t a sure thing. You may be able to economize with a shorter fence around a densely planted raised bed garden area because of the visual-crowding effect. But let’s look at other options. Something to keep in mind, however: if there are enough deer and they are hungry enough, all bets are off.

Plant deer resistant plants. Check plant tags before you buy. Ones with thorns or spines or are bitter tasting work well. Try planting pungent-smelling plants like garlic, sage, mint or catnip around the plants you’re trying to protect. There are repellent products with a bitter taste that may be useful.

Motion-sensor water sprays, lights, rotating owl figures, or noisemakers may discourage deer, but to remain effective, they should be moved around frequently so the deer don’t become accustomed to them.

Repellents can be sprayed on. Foul smells are usually more effective than those that taste bitter. There are many products that use garlic, egg, and blood products to create a repellent. Most of these are expensive and need to be reapplied frequently, especially in our rainy winters—the hungriest time of year for deer. Follow the instructions on the label for best results.

Researchers at the University of Florida have recently conducted some studies and recommend PlotSaver as one of the longer lasting repellents. Another surprising result from the same studies: they recommend spreading pelleted Class A biosolids as a repellent. Using biosolids reduced foraging for more than a month before reapplication was needed.

This is a very safe and effective soil conditioner/slow release fertilizer that is great for your plants (most farmers use this on their fields), easy to apply, and the deer seem to hate it. UF recommends using 125-250 pounds/acre or 1-2 pounds/20 square foot. Often, your local regional waste authority facility will make this available to you at no cost. To learn more about Class A biosolids, Google, “WSU Using Biosolids in Gardens and Landscapes.”



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unrealized dreams. Perhaps Mary Cantwell was referring to MG volunteers when she said: “Gardeners, I think, dream bigger dreams than emperors.”

Warm Regards – Don

PS: It wouldn't be a “From the President” article without a plea for more MGs volunteering at the state level. We've filled several key positions in recent months, including Marylou Krautscheid (Grant-Adams) as Membership Director, John Strong (Yakima) as Webmaster, and Erin Landon (Pacific-Grays Harbor) as Chair of the Financial Review Committee. (Note that John & Erin continue in their roles as Secretary & Newsletter Editor, respectively.) Many positions remain open - particularly Communications Director, Social Media Chair, and Nominating Chair, as well as additional county representatives (up to three per chapter). And again, we really need volunteers for the AEC Procurement Team. For more information, e-mail me at PresidentMGFWS@gmail.com or simply join us at our next board meeting: 10 am on Nov 6th at Ft Worden in Port Townsend.



Great speakers,
keynote by
Karen Chapman,
vendors, lunch
and more!

11th Annual
Cabin Fever
Gardening Symposium

Saturday
March 21, 2020
Center Place - Spokane Valley

WWW.MGFSC.COM




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The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion team is in the beginning phases of defining our work. Our first step is to communicate to all program coordinators and volunteers about the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the work we do and why we must implement specific practices to increase the diversity of volunteers serving in our program.

These teams are rewarding to work with. We are making steady progress toward achieving our vision of being highly recognized, diverse, fully-supported and the go-to resource for research-based, innovative solutions to ever-changing horticulture and environmental stewardship needs.

Thank you again for all you do. I hope you all get to enjoy a relaxing holiday season full of warmth, family, and fun.



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I'm reminded of a lovely visit early last spring. A mama deer brought to two tiny spotted fawns into our front yard early one morning. I was absolutely entranced when I saw them, until they lifted their heads in unison to gaze at me from my planting bed, their mouths full of my deer-resistant sedum! Sigh...you can't win them all!

Sources:

Temporary Food Plot Deterrents for Deer: Do They Work

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/UW/UW41000.pdf>

Resolving Human-Nuisance Wildlife Conflicts

https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201248_5.PDF