



Seeds For Thought

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A newsletter of the
Master Gardener
Foundation of
Washington State

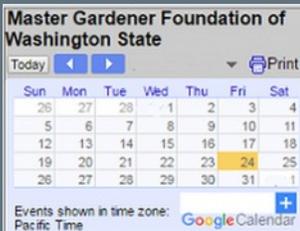
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Visit our website:
MGFWS



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

Clover photo by Ethan Landon, son of Grays Harbor County Master Gardener Erin Landon

From the President

~~Kathleen LaFrancis Eaton, MGFWS President



Photo by Richelle Taylor

Our Mission is to share best practices with foundations and support the State Master Gardener Conference.

When MGFWS asked Douglas-Chelan Counties' Master Gardeners what the biggest benefit is in developing the 2018 Master Gardener Conference, we heard a surprising answer. "Teamwork!"

For me, and I dare speak for the rest of the Board, teamwork has been a joy that keeps on giving. These years of economic challenges and turnover in MG and WSU leadership continue to challenge us. We are encouraged by reports from this year's Conference Committee for several reasons.

First, their capacity to problem-solve and innovate with solutions has produced a format which will bring attendees together in a plenary session on a daily basis. This is key in developing state-wide camaraderie, the platform of teamwork. The more we talk with one another to compare experiences, share our successes, and explore common issues; the stronger our county and state foundations and programs can become.

Second, the new, creative photo competition is both stimulating best practice sharing and contributing to the program's brain trust to preserve and disseminate these practices across the state.

Third, a remarkable dedication to accomplishing this goal in a shorter time than has previously been done portends hope for our mission. As of this writing, we have had no proposals for a 2019 State MG Conference. MGFWS has no choice but to postpone the next conference until 2020. The positive about this observation is that Douglas-Chelan County is showing us it's not necessarily a lost cause. A county could still step forward with a plan for 2019. I'll address more on this topic later in this article.

Finally, the MG program leadership has been intimately involved and addressing to our needs from the outset. It's probably not a coincidence that Jennifer Marquis, MG State is based in the host county. Although the time allotment for Interim State Lead may be less than ideal, Jennifer's expertise is benefitting the entire state in a far greater way because of her Conference involvement in Douglas-Chelan County. I want to extend heartfelt thanks for her dedication and it continues to be a pleasure to work with her.

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The Future of the WSU Master Gardener Program

~~Jennifer Marquis, Interim Statewide Coordinator



“He who plants a seed plants life,” says the Seed Man in a novel by Joanna Goodman. Isn’t it true, though? A seed planted gives hope and provides food for the table and beauty all around. Literally and figuratively planting a seed or sharing an idea inspires growth, encourages caring and builds community. Participating in WSU Master Gardener program is being a part of something bigger than one person. It is being a part of a community that feeds bellies, nourishes souls and fosters human interaction.

As WSU Master Gardener volunteers, you literally and figuratively plant seeds and plant life in the generosity of your everyday work. Each of you represents Washington State University in a way that no paid employee can. You give your time and talents to WSU and to the communities you serve out of a passion for environmental stewardship and for using and teaching research-based, best gardening practices. As WSU Master Gardener volunteers you sow the seeds of life with every step you take. You inspire growth, encourage caring and build strong, healthy communities.

WSU Master Gardener volunteers are the face of the University. Your passion and generosity inspire WSU faculty and staff to do our best to support you and give you the tools you need to be successful. In June WSU Master Gardener Program Coordinators, a few County Extension Directors, the Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Director, Director of County Administration and the Volunteer Specialist met face to face to focus on the future of WSU Master Gardener Program. The purpose of the meeting was to define our strengths, uncover our weaknesses, and brainstorm opportunities that will mitigate the weaknesses and to look for potential roadblocks to growth and improvement. Ultimately, this meeting would guide future leadership.

We highlighted a number of strengths but prioritized highly motivated volunteers, locally relevant programming that meets community needs and overall quality of the program as our most important attributes. In addition, we listed a number of weaknesses that are statewide and county specific. We prioritized the list to focus our efforts on making improvements that will benefit the statewide program and county programs alike. Areas of improvement that need our attention first are:

1. Reduction of access to quality WSU resources: Faculty, Online Training, and Publications
2. Inability to tell the WSU Master Gardener program story to constituents and stakeholders
3. Lack of professional development for program coordinators
4. Lack of infrastructure support for WSU Master Gardener Program Coordinators

To address the weaknesses, working teams comprised of at least one member of the interim statewide leadership team, two to three program coordinators from a representative cross-section of counties, and program volunteers will create team goals and objectives that are specific to each weakness. Other faculty and staff who have the needed skill set to accomplish team goals should be recruited to serve as well. Currently, the teams and team members are:

1. Improving Access to Quality Resources-Todd Murray
 - a. Paula Dinius
 - b. Ann Precup
 - c. Erika Johnson
 - d. Mark Amara
2. Telling and Sharing the WSU Master Gardener Program Story with constituents and stakeholders-Jennifer Marquis
 - a. Erika Johnson
 - b. Tim Kohlhauff

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Plants that Fight Back

~~CAHNRS News

So small it can't be seen with the naked eye, a parasitic worm called the root-knot nematode causes outsized problems for Northwest farmers.

Potatoes, grapes and other crops could gain a new, nature-based way to fight back, thanks to Cynthia Gleason and Jennifer Watts, scientists at Washington State University.

Tiny thieves

Nematodes cause billions of dollars in crop losses nationwide every year. In Washington, they cause significant losses to crops such as grapes, onions, garlic, and the state's \$734 million potato industry.



Root-knot nematode of potato

Pnwhandbooks.org

“Root-knot nematodes are a huge problem for farmers,” said Gleason, plant pathologist with WSU's College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS). Nematodes don't kill the plants, but they leave them stunted, wilted from lack of water, and more susceptible to other pathogens, ultimately reducing farmers' yields.

“Plants don't have many natural resistances to root-knot nematodes, so we need a way to combat them,” Gleason said. Traditionally, farmers have used anti-nematode pesticides—nematicides—to eliminate the tiny worms.

Acid stops nematodes

To help, Gleason is using a new \$47,400 Emerging Research Issues grant from the CAHNRS Office of Research to seek genetic defenses that help crops like potatoes and tomatoes fight back against the persistent pest.

Partnering with Jennifer Watts, researcher in the College of Veterinary Medicine's School of Molecular Biosciences, Gleason is adding genes that tell plants to secrete a specific fatty acid that stops the nematode reproductive cycle. Watts and her team of student researchers discovered that a certain fatty acid, referred to as DGLA (20:3n-6), stops egg production in a cousin species of the root-knot nematode.

“These fatty acids aren't normally produced in plant tissue,” says Watts. “My team and I are working with Cynthia to introduce genes into plants so they can make them. If it works, it could be a new, chemical-free method to control nematodes.”

Future pest fighters

Farmers could one day plant a seed, Gleason said, that grows into a cover or cash crop with its own natural pest control. As nematodes feed on the plants, their populations will fall—leading to healthier plants, bigger crops and an improved food supply.

Full text of the article can be found at <http://news.cahnrs.wsu.edu>

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At the March MGFWS Board meeting, I announced my impending resignation, effective immediately after this year's conference. I was fortunate to be able to a six month lead time for succession planning.



At the June MGFWS Meeting, we passed New bylaws enabling a larger, working board with up to three members from each county. Every board member will have a job and a vote. The goal is for MGFWS to take the lead in hosting the State MG Conference, ideally on an annual basis. 2019 was planned to be a cooperative effort between a host county and the state board. A request for proposal to this effect was sent out in the Spring and the deadline later extended a month to June 30. Obviously, these deadlines have passed.

MGFWS remains dedicated to achieving these goals. For this two happen we need all of you to consider how you might help us help you.

The new structure provides for succession in the President role: Past, current, and President-elect. Moving from the prior structure to the new, both President-Elect and President (effective October 1) are open. Therefore, we are realistically looking for an immediate President-Elect and a second to step in January 2021.

The treasurer position has been redefined as Financial Officer, attending to Endowment Management and sponsor follow-up, and is open for recruitment. Margaret Morris, Yakima County, has served for over seven years. We are grateful for her dedicated service.

John Strong continues as Secretary, well beyond seven years. He, along with several long-term members, will also provide institutional history. The new bylaws alternate election years for officers for greater continuity.

Other key positions to be filled ASAP are two Conference Co-Chairs, Membership chair (who will recruit interested, active members, to fill identified roles), and a Communications Officer (oversees social media, marketing, and the Website). There are numerous ways to assist with the endowment. We are also seeking a Social Media Editor to replace Rachel Lewman, who recently moved to Oregon. Note: we are aware of the difficulty of our website and hope to have it "up" again by this publication.

I have immense gratitude to all with whom I have served, those who served before me, and those who rise to serve in the future. We need your expertise to preserve this highly visible (we are recognized as the first MG Program) and important mission. MGFWS exists to support MG education in Washington State.

We've just begun to reshape MGFWS for our new role. Open your minds to our possibilities. I know we can do this, together! Though I will, personally, move to Arizona in the Fall, the role of Past-President is a serious one and I intend to remain available during the transition. I'll return during the summer months.

MGFWS Board members are enthusiastic about these changes and are here to help you in the role you choose! We encourage any county which may be considering co-hosting the 2019 State MG Conference to contact either John Strong (strongware@me.com) or me at mgfwsresident@gmail.com.



You'll hear from me once more in the Fall newsletter. In the meantime, include the WA State Master Gardener Conference in your plans, September 26-29, 2018. It is an economical way to earn CEUs and share with your colleagues. While you're there, please join us at the MGFWS Annual Board Meeting Wednesday, September 10 am to noon. Come and see how you can contribute to the team, See you in Wenatchee! Thanks for all you do.

(Continued from [page 2](#))

3. Training & Professional Development for Program Coordinators-Jana Ferris

- a. Elizabeth Sims
- b. Claudia Stein
- c. Caiti Blethen

4. Improving Infrastructure Support for the WSU Master Gardener Program-Jim Kropf

- a. Howard Voland

The interim Leadership Team of Todd Murray, Jim Kropf, Jana Ferris and Jennifer Marquis are looking forward to the future of the WSU Master Gardener Program. We are in a unique position as a program. We are traversing new territory. We need to hold onto the seed that was planted in 1973. That seed created the WSU Master Gardener volunteer program. It flourished and its roots support more than 4000 volunteers across the state. Now we need to trust those roots to support continued growth and development. It is time to look forward, search for new and innovative ways to plant new seeds and share innovative ideas that continue to inspire hope and build strong communities. Where will we grow next?



Upcoming Events:

[Family Forest Field Day](#) at Zumstein Family Farm Woodland, WA August 18

[Cosmic Crisp Field Day](#) at WSU Prosser and Wenatchee research orchards September 11

[Sharing Our Roots](#) 2018 WSU MG Conference September 26-29 at the Wenatchee Convention Center

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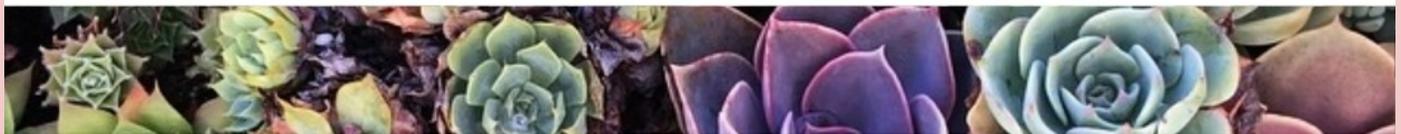


SEPTEMBER 26-29
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 WENATCHEE, WA

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Adam Schwerner
 Director of Horticulture
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