



# Seeds For Thought

February 2019 Volume 19, Issue 1

A newsletter of the  
Master Gardener  
Foundation of  
Washington State

## Creating Highly Functioning Teams

~~Jennifer Marquis, Interim WSU Master Gardener Program Leader

### In This Issue

*Creating Highly  
Functioning Teams* 1

*Garden Tool Care &  
Maintenance* 2

*No, Goats Do Not  
Eat Tin Cans* 3

*Search for  
Excellence Award* 4

*Where Did All My  
Money Go?* 5

*Board Recruitment* 9

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

Visit our website:  
[MGFWS](#)

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



The WSU Master Gardener program is volunteer led and driven. As volunteers, you are the movers and the shakers. You are the ones who deliver sustainable landscaping education to the general public, you are the ones who know what your communities need, and you are the ones who work together to further the mission of the WSU Master Gardener program. Efficient and effective mission achieving work is done by trained and competent people who believe in the purpose of the work they do. Research indicates highly functioning teams achieve mission success more efficiently and effectively than work groups and individuals.

During my tenure as the program coordinator in Chelan and Douglas Counties, I have decided that there is nothing more satisfying than bringing a group of trained and competent individuals together to become a team to achieve a specific goal. Working through the growing pains to become a true team is sometimes stressful and uncomfortable, but that is a necessary part of creating a highly functioning team whose sum is greater than its parts.

There are four elements of a highly functioning team.

1. Common Commitment and Purpose: all team members must be committed to the team and to the purpose the team was created for. This means there must be a clearly defined purpose/mission. Teams should be allowed to develop their mission as it creates ownership and commitment to the team purpose. It is also important for team members to understand how the work they're doing aligns with meeting the mission and vision of the WSU Master Gardener program and WSU Extension.

2. Clearly defined performance goals: Together the team must define their performance goals. Who will do what, how will it get done and by when does it need to be completed to accomplish the overall purpose? Performance goals help facilitate clear communication. Clear goals allow team discussions to be creative and productive. Clear goals are symbols of accomplishment that motivate and energize the team members.

3. Complementary skills: This means ensuring that the people who are on the team have the skills needed to do the various jobs that need doing. That said, most teams are formed before they know what all the jobs will be. It is important to include people on the team who can adapt to accomplish the jobs or who can recruit the right people to do the job. It also means that the people on the team have interpersonal and social skills that allow them to work with one another. This does not necessarily mean choose people who get along. On the contrary, diversity on teams is key to creativity in problem solving and high performance.

*(Continued on [page 6](#))*

## Garden Tool Care and Maintenance

~~Kathy Wolfe, Skagit County Master Gardener

What a gardening year it has been. All of the digging, seeding, watering, planting, pruning, mulching, raking and harvesting have rewarded us well.

The garden and gardener are now prepared to enjoy a respite going into the winter months. But wait. Are you sure you are done? Did you neglect to clean your garden tools?

It is best to clean and disinfect your implements every time they are used, but most of us probably don't. Late fall is a great time to give these tools a good cleaning and sharpening to prepare them for storage and the new gardening year ahead. Any tool with nuts and bolts, screws, blades or chains will need sharpening and maintenance.

Just as a keen kitchen knife eases food preparation, sharp garden tools allow more efficient cutting, are easier to use and last longer. A sharp blade is less likely to slip and will cause less cell damage to the plant, while a dull blade will crush, not cut, the plant stem. The sharp edge allows the plant to heal faster with less chance of infection due to adverse weather or fungi.

Shovel blades should be sharpened to increase ease of use. Sharpen them at a 45-degree angle by running a file across the edge until sharp.



For pruners, sharpen periodically using a whetstone or carbide sharpener to give the blades a finer edge. Sharpen at the same angle of the blade, taking care to file out notches and cuts.

For larger or more irregular blades, research techniques from trusted sources and follow directions closely, or consider taking these blades in for professional honing.

Many find that lawn mower blades are particularly tricky, as improper sharpening can make them unbalanced, which can harm the mower motor as it turns at high speeds.

Clean garden tools prevent the spread of disease when working with infected plants or pruning out diseased limbs.

Keep a container of rubbing alcohol, bleach (1 part bleach to 9 parts water) or disinfectant on hand to clean blades between pruning each plant. Clean sticky plant sap from blades of saws or pruners using paint thinner, then wipe down with a rag.

The main enemy of most metal tools is rust. Soak rusty tools in a weak (1:1) vinegar/water solution for 24 hours. Cheap white vinegar works well for this. After soaking, wipe dry with paper towels then use steel wool to remove the rust. You may have to repeat the process before all rust is removed. Severely rusted tools may require using rough sandpaper or a wire bristle brush. In extreme cases, a drill with a wire brush attachment or wire wheel can be used. Be sure to wear safety glasses doing this procedure. Use a light, circular motion rather than scraping to avoid thinning or scratching the metal beneath. After any de-rusting, wipe the metal with a coat of oil. To avoid rust problems, consider purchasing stainless steel tools.

*(Continued on [page 7](#))*

## **No, Goats Do Not Eat Tin Cans!**

~~ Duane Pitts, WSU Grant-Adams Master Gardener

“What can goats NOT eat?”

This was one of the most interesting questions posed to us at the Moses Lake Farmers Market Plant Clinic last summer. My first, flippant remark: “Steel rods and granite!” Then I added, “We will look that up and get back to you. We just don’t know what they do NOT eat.”

Like most people, I thought goats ate everything! My maternal grandmother had a goat, Molly by name, and her pen was all bare ground, so I assumed she ate everything there -- trees, weeds and all.

However, goats do NOT eat everything least of all tin cans, steel rods, or even granite! Though many plants are good for goats (and most goat farmers know this), some plants are toxic for goats. According to the Department of Animal Science at Cornell University, goats do NOT have a cast-iron stomach! Some goats accidentally sample toxic plants and suffer the consequences, but the major reason for food poisoning for goats comes as a result of having nothing else to eat when they ingest poisonous plants.

Sometimes goats will spit out a plant (like Foxglove) that tastes bad to them and not repeat that experience. When nothing else is available, they will sample paper, various weeds, clothes, and even plants they do not know are toxic.

The poisonous plants fall under the following categories: alkaloid, cyanogenic, photosensitizing, saponins, tannins, glucosides, volatile oils, and others in a mixed category. Those interested in determining which plants belong to these groups can refer to the attached list and check out the identified references. For our purposes, listed some of the common plants/fruits toxic to goats.

Here’s my short list of POISONOUS PLANTS TO AVOID:

- Avocado, Azalea, Black Locust, Boxwood, Buckwheat,
- Buttercups, Cherry (Wild, Choke, or otherwise), Chocolate,
- Clover, Cocklebur, Common Poppy, Daffodil,
- Fiddleneck, Gladiolus, Kale, Larkspur, Lupine,
- All Nightshade varieties, Holly trees or bushes,
- Iris, Ivy, Laurel, Lilacs, Lily of the Valley, Marijuana,
- Marsh Mallow, Milkweed, Mullein, Oak (limbs, leaves, acorns),
- Pine Trees (do NOT feed goats living or dead Christmas trees!), Ponderosa Pine Needles, Rape, Red Maples,
- Rhododendron (kills a goat very quickly – probably before the vet can be called),
- Sand Bur, Sevenbark, Rhubarb leaves, Tomato plants, Yew Trees.



<http://2.bp.blogspot.com> free use

This list of toxic plants is NOT exhaustive, of course, so always check before feeding a goat any plant. “Know BEFORE you feed a goat” is wise advice.

## Search for Excellence Awards

~~Cathi Lamoreux, Spokane County Master Gardener

### Search for Excellence Awards at the International Master Gardener Conference

The WSU Spokane County Master Gardener Program was notified in the fall that our application for a Search for Excellence award won first place in the Community Support category! We submitted for consideration our Plant Clinic with the Plant Clinic Specialist program.

The Plant Clinic has been in consistent operation in Spokane County since 1974, operating out of a permanent location since 1998. The clinic is open March 1-October 31, 6 days per week. In 2009, the Plant Clinic Specialist (PCS) program began. Veteran Master Gardeners, who had both a desire and the knowledge base to become daily operation leaders in the Plant Clinic, participate in specialized training. Approximately 30 MGs serve as Plant Clinic Specialists each year.

Master Gardeners who commit to becoming a PCS, must agree to the following:

- Attend monthly educational and training sessions
- Sign up for 40 hours in the Plant Clinic in the PCS role
- Mentor MG volunteers while in the Plant Clinic
- Ensure that all operational procedures are followed

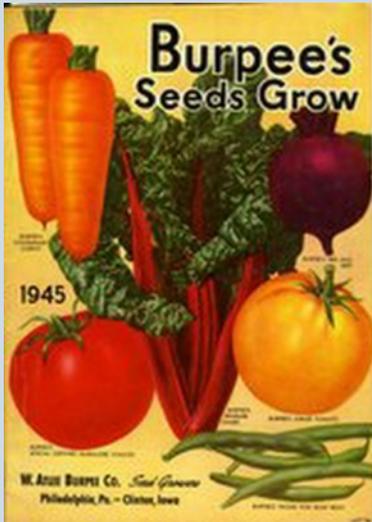
We are very proud of our Plant Clinic and the PCS program that keeps it running smoothly. Every year we provide assistance to approximately 4700 people who contact the clinic. We are excited to be able to share our training program with other counties throughout the country at the International MG Conference to be held in June in Valley Forge, PA.



Photos courtesy of Cathi Lamoreux  
Spokane County Master Gardener

## Where Did All My Money Go? A Short History of the Seed Catalog

~~ Katie Lutz - WSU Grays Harbor/Pacific County Master Gardener



Burpee Catalog from 1945  
Photo courtesy OSU

You know that the new year has arrived when seed catalogs start filling your mailbox. As I started to flip through the slightly damp catalogs that had arrived at my door, I started to wonder, “How long have seed catalogs been around?” After a little bit of research, I found that they have been around a lot longer than I realized.

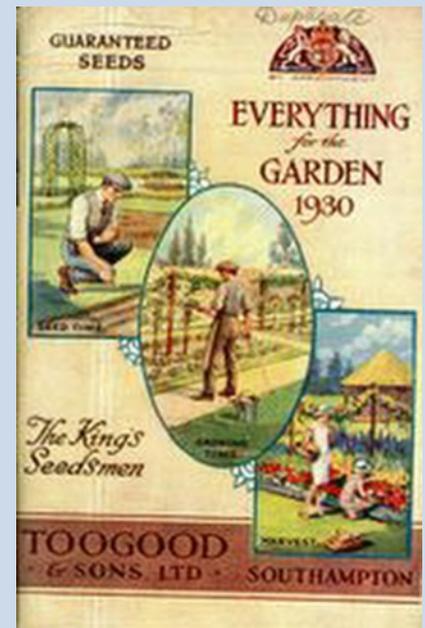
The earliest catalogs stemmed from books known as herbals. Herbals were like the POJARs of the Middle Ages, they helped people identify plants correctly for the purpose of treating illnesses. As the wealthiest of the 16<sup>th</sup> century began to import more exotic plants to fill their estates, they would often publish their own personal catalogs as ornate “florilegia.” These books shared the focus on classification with the herbals but moved away from the medicinal value to focus on the ornamental value of these plants. To the surprise of nobody, the oldest surviving catalog contains a merchant’s list of tulip bulbs for sale in 1612.

Most of these early catalogs were targeted towards wealthy clients and few survive due to the small number that were printed. Additionally, large seed and nursery businesses did not really exist at this time (at least businesses that sold to all classes)

and the average person would save or exchange seeds locally. Over the course of the 1700s, this would gradually change as more interest in purchasing seeds and plants expanded to all social levels and printing became cheaper and easier.

By the early 1800s, the British had developed quite the green thumb as plants from their various colonies were being sent home for enterprising gardeners to grow on their properties. The catalogs began to change as well, taking advantage of the gardening interest that had developed amongst all social classes. No longer was there just a focus on exotics or ornamentals, but the more “practical” plants – fruits, vegetables, medicinal plants, and herbs-made a return to the pages of the catalogs. Catalogs were also easier to mass print and to entice gardeners to purchase their wares featured even more ornate illustrations. Newly developed mail-order services allowed people all over the country to place orders. Lists had also expanded to include item numbers, prices, lengthier descriptions, and cultural growing instructions.

Meanwhile across the pond, seed catalogs originating in the US started out on the East coast as simple lists in the late 1700s. A few notable seed catalog authors, with advice such as gardening being a suitable activity for the proper woman and the firsts tips of planting relative to the local climate, made a splash but it wasn’t until after the Civil War that the seed and nursery market exploded in the US. Once commercial and postal networks had been upgraded, Americans were inundated with mail-order catalogs that more closely resembled what had been available to the mass market in Europe since the early 1800s. The increased competition for a gardener’s attention



Everything for the Garden  
from 1930 Photo courtesy  
OSU

(Continued on [page 8](#))

(Continued from [page 1](#))

4. Mutual Accountability: This means you have trust in your teammates to do get the job done, or if they cannot get the job done that the team will pick up the task. Essentially the team wins together and loses together. There is no “T” in TEAM. A true working team is greater than the sum of its parts.

So how does all this relate to the WSU Master Gardener program?

I like to think of it in terms of all the volunteers and program coordinators as one giant team working to fulfill our mission of engaging the public in science-based sustainable landscaping practices for the protection of our natural resources. There is a common commitment and purpose among the volunteers and the coordinators to fulfill the mission. Volunteers and coordinators provide a plethora of skill sets allowing the program to engage in a variety of programs and projects and we hold each other mutually accountable to the mission of the overall program. We are lacking clearly defined statewide goals but are working to create them.

At the county level, the statewide mission is achieved through the development and implementation of educational programs and projects that meet unique community needs. Smaller teams of volunteers work on creating the programs. Each individual program and project team must have its own purpose, clearly defined performance goals, contain people with complementary skills and hold each other mutually accountable to the tasks.

What is the program coordinator’s role in creating and developing a team?

The Program Coordinator is responsible for ensuring:

- volunteers are well trained
- capable of achieving project goals and ultimately program success,
- county projects’ purposes and directions align with program mission and vision,
- removal of roadblocks to success and providing the team with the tools they need to be successful.

Program coordinators must also help teams focus on the purpose, performance goals and tasks that need to be completed, rather than on personality conflicts. Leadership should point out small wins the team makes on its journey toward mission completion.

Much of the information contained was adapted from *The Discipline of Teams* by Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith <https://hbr.org/1993/03/the-discipline-of-teams-2>. Read the full article for in-depth information.



*(Continued from [page 2](#))*

For day-to-day maintenance for tools such as shovels, hoes and garden forks, it is convenient to set up a cleaning station that includes a stiff wire brush with a scraper end, a rag, and a bucket filled with sand or kitty litter and moistened with mineral or linseed oil. When your gardening day is done, use a stiff wire brush to dislodge the debris then rinse your tools using a stream of water from the garden hose. Dry thoroughly. Drag the tool through the sand/oil mixture to coat the blade. The oil coating will retard moisture and limit rust, and the sand helps provide abrasion to remove residual soil.

Pruners are most easily washed with a nail brush or scrub pad using soap and water. Dry thoroughly then lubricate with a drop or two of a multipurpose household oil, machine oil or grease into the pivot point to allow blades to move freely and not catch or rub. Use mineral spirits to remove residue. If pruners are dull, give them a sharpening, being careful to slide the blade along the stone in one direction until sharp. Keep the file at the correct angle to the edge of the tool surface. Next, check that all tool bolts and screws are tight.

Dry wooden handles can split or break. Using the lightly oiled rag near the sand bucket, give handles a swipe after each use. Twice each season sand the wood with medium grit sandpaper, then rub with a slightly moistened linseed oil rag to create a protective layer. Allow all oil rags to dry in the open air to avoid the risk of combustion. Store wood-handled tools indoors in a dry storage area.

The correct storage of garden tools will give them longer life and keep them sharper longer. Store items separately in a dry place such as a shed, garage or closet. Keep them off the floor to prevent moisture, rust and dulling. Consider adding hanging racks or a pegboard rack system. Place a waterproof cover over any machine, such as a lawn mower, that must be stored outside due to lack of storage space.

Taking the time to set up a simple cleaning station for next year and doing some additional cleaning and maintenance of your garden tools now will reward you well when spring once again smiles upon us.



Photo by Nancy K. Crowell, Skagit County MG

(Continued from [page 5](#))

also saw special offers, novelty varieties, and contests appearing in seed catalogs for the first time.

By the early 1900s, catalogs were more colorful than ever, but the quick succession of World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II, had a major impact on the seed business. Catalogs took advantage of this by advertising the importance of a vegetable garden in a war economy and offering staple foods at a lower cost. Exports decreased drastically and local production of seeds increased. Catalogs were also printed on cheaper paper and where rationed, like in Great Britain, returned to being simple plant lists.

After World War II ended, seed catalogs returned in full size and full color to celebrate the end of the war. All-in-one garden centers began to spread and some of these catalogs began to advertise directly to these new businesses. The following 50 years were a boom time for seed catalogs. They remained mostly the same until the arrival of the internet in the mid-90s. Many companies have made the jump from print to digital to save money and time, however many businesses still offer both. No matter the format, it is easier than ever to get access to seeds and spend all of your hard-earned money for a summer time dream.

This is merely a simplified overview of the history of the seed catalog. For a longer and quite interesting read, I encourage you to check out “The Short History of The Seed & Nursery Catalogue in Europe & The US” presented by Oregon State University here:

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/omeka/exhibits/show/seed>



The New Guide to Rose Culture: Roses, Hardy Plants, Bulbs and Seeds. 1889. Photo Courtesy OSU

## From the Ground Up

~~Alice Dionne - WSU Pierce County Master Gardener

Pierce County Master Gardeners 5th Annual Summer Workshop - From the Ground and Up - will be offered on Saturday, June 22, 2019, at Franklin Pierce High School and Farm in Tacoma. Two keynote speakers, in the morning Sue Goetz, Landscape Designer, and at lunchtime, Merrill Peterson, Author of the newly published 'Pacific Northwest Insects Field Guide', will lead the presentations. Some of the other presenters and topics include Scott Vergara on Drought Tolerance and Aquatic Container Gardening, Diana Wisen on Poisonous Plants, Lisa Taylor on Vegetables, Cyndi Stuart on Herb Gardening, Kathleen DeMaria on Latin for Gardeners, Sean Tait on How Trees Communicate, Kevin Zorbist on Trees and Drought, Fungi Perfecti, and Organic Seed Alliance. Registration opens March 15; \$40 + lunch. Hope you can join us for this exciting continuing education offering.

*Editors Note: Check with your county program coordinator for eligibility for CE hours.*

## Board Membership

We're Currently Recruiting!

Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State is currently seeking three or more representatives from each county to join our working board. All members will have a both a vote and a defined role. This is a unique opportunity to create the legacy of perpetual education for WSU Master Gardeners.

Some specific unfilled roles:

- President
- Executive Vice President
- Communications Officer
- Development Team Members
- Social Media Coordinator
- Historian
- Conference Committee Team Members

MGFWS has many opportunities, some of which we are just beginning to explore. If you have talents you believe would benefit our mission. Please contact John Strong, Secretary at [secretarymgfws@gmail.com](mailto:secretarymgfws@gmail.com).

*Seeds for Thought* is a quarterly publication of the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State (MGFWS)  
Published February, May, August & November

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WSU MG Program Leader Interim	Jennifer Marquis	WSU	<a href="mailto:jgmarquis@wsu.edu">jgmarquis@wsu.edu</a>

10<sup>th</sup> Annual **Cabin Fever**  
Gardening Symposium



Saturday  
**March 30**  
2019

Back  
to our  
Roots!

CenterPlace ■ Spokane Valley  
more info & tickets **mgfsc.org**

\$65 for 4 sessions, lunch included (\$60 Foundation members)



Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication or program information or reasonable accommodations need to contact Spokane County Extension, 222 N Havana, Spokane WA 99202, or call 509-477-2048 at least 2 weeks prior to the event.