

The Dirt

The Newsletter of the Master Gardener Foundation of King County



February 2013

A Note from Our President, Dave Hanower



Happy New Year!

2012 was a good year for the Foundation. According to a preliminary financial report from the Foundation's Treasurer, Mick Duggan, our income exceeded our expenses by roughly \$12,000. That may sound like a modest accomplishment, but it is a very positive sign. Since King County cut its funding for the Master Gardener program (and for most other WSU Extension programs) in 2010, our Foundation had to step in and fill the funding void. For a couple of years our expenses exceeded our income. While we had to dip into the Foundation's assets to cover the funding shortfall, our Foundation's financial condition is still strong. I would like to recognize many people for helping the Foundation recover its financial footing, including Mick's tireless work as Treasurer, the efforts of my predecessors, Judy Por-

terfield and Sam Mitchell, and the Foundation's Board of Directors.

Key to last year's success was our ability to diversify our sources of income in three key respects. First, through Elaine Anderson's efforts, we expanded our volunteer role at the 2012 Northwest Flower & Garden Show, and the show's promoters made a very generous donation to the Foundation in appreciation for our efforts. Second, through the efforts of Board member Joyce Harms and former Board member Steve Scott, we revived and expanded the Plant Sale raffle. Thanks to each of our Master Gardeners who helped to make the raffle a success by selling tickets last Spring. Finally, we participated for the first time in the Seattle Foundation's GiveBig! event, and, again, thanks to all of you who supported us in that effort. Great work everyone!

It seems like winter should be a quiet season for the Master Gardeners, but in fact the Foundation's activity for 2013 is already cranking up. In February we will once again participate in the Northwest Flower &

Garden Show. You did a fabulous job last year, and I hope that we can count on your support at this year's show! The Plant Sale committee has begun to plan this year's sale, and is always looking for additional volunteers. If you are interested in helping, please contact Plant Sale chair Horst Momber.

Finally, we have begun the process of identifying candidates to serve on the Board, with elections to occur in May. The Board has appointed Signa Treat as chair of the Search Committee. If you are interested in running or just want to find out what's involved, I encourage you to read about the positions on our website, mgfkc.org. Nominations are due by February 15. Having an active, engaged Board of Directors is critical to the long-term success of the Foundation, and it is a great way to learn more about the program.

Thank you for a great 2012. I look forward to an even better 2013! And thank you for all that you do for the Master Gardener program and for the Foundation.

Inside this issue:

MLK DAY OF SERVICE	2
SPRING FEVER	3
FOUNDATION MEETINGS	3
BOOKS	4
BOARD NOMINATIONS	4
PLANTS FOR THE PLANT SALE	5
THINKING OF GROWING VEGGIES?	6

The Dirt



A family of volunteers at the rain garden maintenance event on January 21st at the Center for Urban Horticulture, Seattle, Washington.

Photo courtesy of Aaron Clark, Stewardship Partners



Margaret Metz-Holland (upper left), Tabitha Borchardt (upper right), Bev Morrow (middle stairs in green jacket, white hat and scarf), Aaron Clark (left base of stairs) and Kern Ewing (right base of stairs) pose with a portion of the volunteers after finishing maintenance on the rain gardens on January 21st at the Center for Urban Horticulture in Seattle, Washington.

Photo courtesy of Aaron Clark, Stewardship Partners



Martin Luther King Day of Service

By Margaret Metz-Holland, WSU Extension Rain Garden Program Coordinator King County

On Monday January 21, Rain Garden Educators Tabitha Borchardt and Bev Morrow helped Aaron Clark of Stewardship Partners, Kern Ewing, Professor of Plant Ecology at the University of Washington and me work with volunteers in maintenance work on the rain gardens at the Center for Urban Horticulture.

It was a crisp, overcast day, but the group of 36 volunteers worked diligently and tirelessly on pulling weeds, removing landscape fabric, and planting, hauling, and spreading mulch. The group consisted of toddlers to retirees, students to engineers.

The work in the garden was preceded by a talk from Aaron about rain gardens and their maintenance. I then gave a brief talk about the Master Gardener and Rain Garden Educator (RGE) programs. During the work much teaching and learning went on about plants, weeds, general gardening techniques and how rain gardens work.

This was WSU Extension Rain Garden Program King County's first event, and I could not be happier with how it turned out. The highlight of the day (according to the pre-teen boys) was finding the garter snake in one of the rain gardens.

This is one type of public outreach that is available as a RGE. More information about rain gardens can be found at [12,000 Rain Gardens](#), or by contacting me. I can put you in touch with one of our RGEs. Training is a mix of in class lecture and a hands on workshop. I can be reached at 206-799-4030 or m.metz-holland@wsu.edu.

Join us for the 2013

Master Gardener Plant Sale

SATURDAY **May 4** and SUNDAY **May 5**

- Lots of **Pots & Tons of Tomatoes**
- **Personal Plant Pickers & Fixers**
- **Plenty of Parking**

 Like us on Facebook

UW Center for Urban Horticulture • 3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle

Supported by the **Master Gardener Foundation of King County** mgfkc.org

The Dirt

Spring Fever in January

by Jane Garrison, MG, formerly of the Issaquah Press

Every January I get spring fever. Even on a sunny, almost frosty day I will sneak off to a nursery just to wallow in the thoughts of sunshine, flowers, warm musky earth, and buzzing bees. But this year it didn't happen. It worried me, so I went to CUH in the cold drizzle to look at things in bloom.

Of course there were the exquisite witch hazel espaliers covered with orange or red flowers, the lovely Edgeworthia just about to burst, and the Dawn Viburnum brilliantly

decked out in pink. The Charity Mahonia, Sasanqua Camellias, and even the Rosemary were blooming, making my visit to CUH in mid-winter very worthwhile. It was fun to see the dried grasses and bold sedum seed heads at this time of year too.

But all that didn't jump start my missing mojo. Then, all of a sudden I happened on it. Thousands of 2" tall Narcissus shoots were just busting out of the ground. It worked. I got a twinge of that good old crazy feeling - spring fever.



It's coming, and it's going to be great. Just you wait and see.

'EVERY JANUARY I GET SPRING FEVER. EVEN ON A SUNNY, ALMOST FROSTY DAY I WILL SNEAK OFF TO A NURSERY JUST TO WALLOW IN THE THOUGHTS OF SUNSHINE, FLOWERS, WARM MUSKY EARTH, AND BUZZING BEES.'

Future Foundation Meetings

All Master Gardener's are welcome and encouraged to attend board meetings.

Thursday, March 14, 7 pm to 8:30 pm, CUH

Thursday, April 11, 7 pm to 8:30 pm, CUH

Thursday, May 9, 7 pm to 8:30 pm, CUH

Always check to ensure the meeting time/place have not changed.

Recent Foundation News

- Seeking new board members
- By-Laws Updated
- Memo of Understanding with WSU renewed

Details on the Foundation website at <http://www.mgfk.org/members-information>



Like Us!

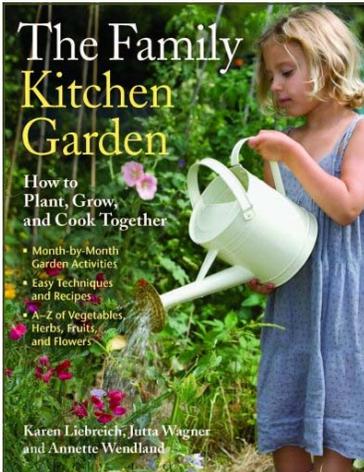
Master Gardener Foundation of King County



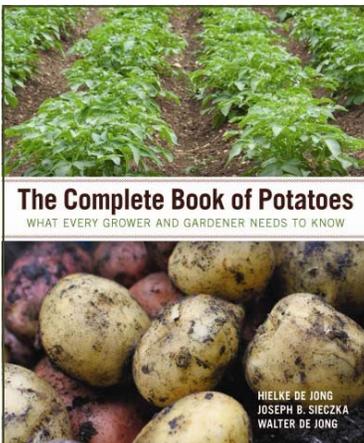
Visit Us!

MGFKC Website: <http://www.mgfk.org>

The Dirt



The Family Kitchen Garden: How to Plant, Grow and Cook Together by Karen Liebreich, Jutta Wagner & Annette Wendland. Timber Press, 2009.



The Complete Book of Potatoes: What Every Grower and Gardener Needs to Know by Hielke De Jong, Joseph B. Sieczka, Walter De Jong. Timber Press, 2011.



Our Foundation provides two-thirds of the funding for the Master Gardener program in King County. Having an active and engaged Board of Directors is critical to the long-term success of the Foundation. Election of new directors will occur in May. We need Master Gardeners with a variety of backgrounds and skills to serve on the Board. It is a great way to learn more about the Master Gardener program. See [the Foundation website](#) for more information. If you would like to know more about what is involved or have any questions about the process, please contact Signa Treat, our Search Committee chair, at signa5302@peoplepc.com. You can nominate yourself or let the committee know of Master Gardeners you think ought to be considered.

The nomination deadline is February 15.

We Want Your Ideas for Recurring Columns! Send us an email: newsletter@mgfkc.org

What's Happening in Your Patch?

Here's where you tell us what's going on in your clinic and demo garden.

Trips You've Taken/ Gardens You Have Visited

Please include some photos!

Garden Visits

Provide reasons why and address.

Catalogs

What are your favorite/least favorite catalogs and why?

News

What do you want other MG's to know about? Events, classes, happenings?

Plant Sale Volunteer Opportunity:

Inside – and No Heavy Lifting!

This year, once again, we'll be opening the Coffee Shop in the educational building and we're looking for a few volunteers who are willing to man – and woman – the counter.

This is a great chance to meet fellow MGs and folks who are shopping our sale. We'll have muffins and cookies from Costco, hot coffee, water, and tea.

If this sounds like fun and something you'd like to be involved in, please contact Judy Porterfield at judyporterfield@comcast.net. Both Saturday and Sunday opportunities are available, first come, first served on dates and shifts!

The Dirt

Plan Plants for the Plant Sale

by Sam Mitchell

What can I do?

Every year MGs ask for a list of plants to donate to the plant sale in May, it's not easy. Think about what will sell and what will create a desire to come to our sale - unusual plants.

What works and what doesn't?

Trends apply to gardens like everything else. We're competing to sell plants with retail nurseries and other plant sales. The market gets saturated. We'd prefer to have a start from unusual plants you're growing. And watch for invasives! That fennel you love is now worrisomely spreading, so we won't be selling it. Don't share problem plants.

Here are some guidelines:

Look! I have a million, want some? Maybe... If you have 20 divisions of something, the sale can probably use your best 4 or 5, but we don't want all of them.

Look what someone gave me! It does really well, and I am willing to share. Maybe... If you've already given divisions to all your neighbors and fellow MGs, chances are we can't sell it.

'John Doe' or 'Jauquin Venado'. Which one has more pizzazz?! We always prefer unique, named cultivars. *Syringa vulgaris* 'Sensation' will outsell the unnamed lilac start from your yard.

I don't know what it is, but I bet you do. Maybe... If you don't know, don't bring it. Surprises appear throughout the sale — random plants left without IDs. We appreciate the thought, but it doesn't reflect well on MGs to offer these plants to the public.

It's the well-rooted, named, interesting plants that we have the best chance of selling. So (1) plan the plants for the plant sale carefully, (2) label them, ideally with genus, species, and cultivar, and (3) bring them to the Potting Party on **March 30**.



'IF YOU HAVE A GARDEN AND A LIBRARY, YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED'

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

'FLOWERS ALWAYS MAKE PEOPLE BETTER, HAPPIER, AND MORE HELPFUL; THEY ARE SUNSHINE, FOOD AND MEDICINE FOR THE SOUL'

LUTHER BURBANK



The Dirt

Questions?

[Master Gardener Foundation of King County](#)

Comments?

Center for Urban Horticulture
University of Washington
Box 354115
Seattle WA 98195
Phone: 206.543.0221

Submissions?

Send us an e-mail!

newsletter@mgfkc.org

Newsletter Co-editors

Anne Ellett
Cecilia McGowan



Thinking of Growing Veggies?



Elaine Anderson, Coordinator Master Gardener Program in King County

Have you been thinking of growing your own vegetables? Now is the perfect time to begin planning. As a novice, you'll want to begin with vegetables that are easy to grow. And, you'll want to start with a small, efficient, and productive garden. This should be in an area of your yard that will provide adequate sunlight, good soil, and easy access for planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting.

Vegetables need a minimum of six hours of direct sunlight a day. If you don't have such a site now, you might be able to create one by pruning a few branches from a tree or removing a shrub or two.

What about your soil? If you can dig into it to a depth of one foot without undue strain on your back, and if drains well, your soil should be fine for a first garden. Later, when you gain experience, you'll probably want to amend it, but don't worry about that for this first season.

Will you be able to water your garden with little trouble? A small garden can easily be hand-watered, but the hose has to reach there! And, you will need to be able to reach there, too. Design the perimeter of your plot for easy access – for yourself and a wheelbarrow. Make sure that you'll be able to reach in to weed and harvest each spot in the garden without uncomfortable stretching.

Begin planting when your soil is moist, but not soggy. This will most likely be sometime in March. Plant no more than a half-dozen vegetables this first time, and choose ones that are easy to grow. How about leaf lettuce, green onions, radishes, and peas? Plant seeds according to the directions on the package and choose varieties that grow well in the Puget Sound area. The Territorial Seed Company specializes in these varieties, and their catalog is available online at <http://www.territorial-seed.com>.

Once your seeds are planted, don't let the soil become dry. Keep it damp, but not soaked. Lots and lots of seedlings will soon be poking up out of the ground, seeking air and light. Now comes what I find to be one of the most difficult gardening decisions. Which will live and which will die? Keep in mind how large the mature plants will be and remove most (yes, most!) of the seedlings from around the ones you want to thrive and grow.

You'll have many more questions than this brief introduction to vegetable gardening can answer. You'll want to know about fertilizer, for example, and about pest control. For help, contact a Master Gardener at ask-a-mastergardener@live.com. Pick up a copy of *Growing Vegetables West of the Cascades* by Steve Solomon, which is the best book on the subject. Get started now planting for your summer harvest, and there will be plenty of time for a fall harvest, too.