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## The Foundation Connection

A monthly e-newsletter from the Master Gardener Foundation of King County

**August 2015 Issue**



### Master Gardener of the Month

#### *Pat Roome and How the Master Gardener Foundation of King County Got its Start*

When Pat Roome of Bellevue graduated from the third WSU Extension Master Gardener class in 1975, she had no idea what a crucial role she would play in maintaining the Master Gardener program itself.

"I had been volunteering as a Master Gardener for two or three years.



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We were struggling at the clinics...we took our own books, our own chairs and tables. If we saw two people, we thought we'd done well," remembers Pat. "There was no money for anything." George Pinyuh, long-time WSU Area Extension Agent, had an idea. "George knew that the only way to go forward was to establish a foundation. And he asked me to start it!" says Pat.

*Pat Roome, a Master Gardener since 1975, was instrumental in starting the Master Gardener Foundation of King County*

She gathered together about a half-a-dozen other Master Gardeners to work on the foundation idea. "Our group decided what to call it and how to run it. The Foundation was established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 1984, and we were on our way."

Some of Pat's other notable garden-related accomplishments include being a founding member of the Bellevue Botanical Garden Society, being involved with the creation of the Master Gardener Bellevue Demonstration Garden, and working as a landscape design consultant and contractor during a time when women were not readily accepted in that role.

At age 82, Pat remains an active Master Gardener. "I give talks at the Bellevue Parks' Ranger Station," she says. "I speak on 32 topics, but the most popular one is 'Growing your own vegetables.' The last one, held in January this year, was standing-room only!" In June, she gave a talk on alternatives to pesticides and herbicides. Another popular talk is 'Growing in the Shade.'

Pat also remains active in her own garden. She has been working her half-acre ever since moving in 50 years ago. "I have a huge vegetable garden and all these espaliered fruit trees. And I've worked to have trees you'll find nowhere else in the area. I have visited gardens in southwest England, and it's amazing how many seeds ended up landing in my pocket," says Pat with a wink.

Read all about her move from England to Seattle and the roles she has played in the Master Gardener history in Seattle...

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## **Eldergrow - A New Opportunity for Master Gardeners**

This past spring the WSU Extension Master Gardener program partnered with Eldergrow, a new company based in Seattle and founded by Orla Concannon. Orla's passion is to bring gardening and horticultural therapy to elders living in care facilities.



*Eldergrow is a new company that brings gardening and horticultural therapy to elders in care facilities. Photo by Charles Ellis, courtesy Ida Culver House Ravenna*

The seed for Orla's inspiration was planted by her Irish grandmother, Nana. "Nana was special in many ways. One of her gifts was to grow show-stopping geraniums from leaves she 'borrowed' from places like restaurants," Concannon happily reminisced. "However, her last few years were spent in a nursing home where she was deprived of essential stimulation, and she missed her garden. That was twenty years ago, and I've wanted to fix that problem ever since..."

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## **Clinic Spotlight: *Burien***

On a recent balmy Monday evening, volunteers from the Burien Clinic raised their wine glasses and went for a stroll in Master Gardener Julie Montiel's garden.

In addition to well-deserved compliments on a stunning lakeside garden, the tour included plant identification, a discussion on choosing the best location for plants, and a Q & A from two dozen knowledgeable Master Gardeners.

The Burien Clinic volunteers are a close-knit bunch, with 32 active Master Gardeners staffing clinics at the Burien Library and Furney's Nursery in Des Moines...



*The Burien Clinic group met at Master Gardener Julie Montiel's lakeside garden for their July meeting*

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## **Soos Creek Growing Groceries Demonstration Garden**

...by [Nancy Purcell](#)

The newest addition to the Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens is the Soos Creek Growing Groceries Demonstration Garden located in north Auburn.

The new Demonstration Garden grew out of the Soos Creek Fruit and Vegetable Garden, which was begun in 2010 under the supervision of Master Gardener Trish Bottorff. It opened to the public in July of 2011. The 600-square-foot garden is equipped with a shade house, hoop house, water, storage shed, compost and worm bins. There are raised beds, fencing, six-foot wide gravel paths, and a sprinkler system. The focus of the garden is to provide education to the public and to youth. The vegetable garden contributes food to both the Auburn and Maple Valley food banks. Last year 1600 pounds were donated over the course of the summer, and 436 pounds have already been sent this summer...



*(left to right) Soos Creek volunteer Robyn Welch, WSU Extension Master Gardener Program Coordinator Elaine Anderson, second-year Master Gardener Nancy Purcell*

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## **What's Happening? News and Updates**

- [Next MGF Board Meeting](#): Thursday,



Aug. 13, at Marymoor Garden Pea Patch in Redmond.

- [Applications for 2016 Master Gardener training class](#) are now available. Submission deadline is October 16. Incorporating online modules and classroom instruction, the Master Gardener training class in King County will be on 12 consecutive Saturdays beginning on Jan. 9, 2016. Contact [Elaine Anderson](#) for more information.
- [Explore, Learn and Lead, 2015 WSU Advanced Education Conference](#), Sept. 17-19, 2015, in Vancouver WA. Registration now open.
- **Annual MGF Meeting & MG Recognition Dinner**, Thursday, October 22. Mark the date on your calendar. Details will be provided later.
- **Recognition Nominations for Outstanding Master Gardeners.** These Master Gardeners will be honored at the Recognition Dinner in October. Now is the time to think about whom to nominate who has gone 'above and beyond' in service to the Master Gardener program in King County. Look for Elaine's email with more details later.



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