

# Seattle Tilth

ORGANIC GARDENING • URBAN ECOLOGY • COMPOSTING • RECYCLING

VOL 30 NO 2 • APRIL/MAY 2007

## Theme Your Garden

### Plant Sale Offers Chance to Grow Edibles From Around the Globe

Laura Niemi, Garden Coordinator

As a long-time food gardener, I have a list of favorite varieties that I grow every year. It ensures I have my favorite sweet and fruity tomatoes, spicy, brightly-colored peppers and healthy leafy greens to eat all season. But I have started to get bored with that predictability, and this year I want to try something new.

Inspired by seed catalogs and cookbooks, I have decided to plant themed kitchen gardens this year.

There are so many varieties of vegetables and herbs offered at the Tilth Edible Plant Sale that come from all over the globe, so why not take cues from those countries and plant their offerings together?

For example, you could plant a French “potager” garden with Bleu de Solaize leeks, Jaune Flammée and Tonadose Des Conores tomatoes, Rouge Vif D’Etampes pumpkin, French sorrel, chervil, lavender and the rest of the herbs that make up the bouquet garni.

Or consider an Italian countryside garden with Tuscan kale, Romanesco broccoli, radicchio, bulbing fennel, Jimmy Nardello frying peppers, Pantano Romanesco and San Marzano tomatoes, Genovese basil and Italian oregano.

How about an American heritage garden, with varieties developed and grown in the U.S.? You’d use Table Queen acorn squash, Early Yellow crookneck squash, Cherokee Purple, Sioux and Gill’s All Purpose tomatoes, Fish hot pepper, Walla Walla sweet onion, and Pike or Early Moonbeam melons.

Look on your bookshelf for inspiration. Go through your favorite cookbooks, garden books and even travel books. A photograph or recipe might inspire you to plant a Thai curry garden with eggplant, onions, peppers, lemongrass, Thai basil and cilantro. Or you might decide to make your own curry paste with peppers you grow in your garden. For extra visual appeal, you can even build a trellis or other garden structures in the style of your theme country.

See you at the Plant Sale!

## Build Community, Learn, Eat at Tilth Third Thursdays

Sharing good garden talk and potluck food is a wonderful way to spend a Thursday evening. Join your friends at Seattle Tilth as we reinstate Tilth Third Thursdays, a monthly social and educational get-together.

Each month’s meeting will have a special theme or speaker. They will be held in Room 140 (the Senior Center) at the Good Shepherd Center, beginning at 7 p.m.

The next Third Thursday event will be April 19, and will be a seed swap and National Volunteer Week celebration.

Third Thursdays are free monthly programs organized by the Tilth board’s Volunteer



*Pitch in to help us make the 2007 Edible Plant Sale a success. The sale is Saturday, May 5, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. and Sunday, May 6, 11 a.m.–3 p.m., and volunteer coordinator Rachel Weiner is organizing more than 250 amazing Tilth helpers. Contact her at [plantsalevolunteer@seattletilth.org](mailto:plantsalevolunteer@seattletilth.org) or 206-633-5045, ext. 1.*

**Tilth  
Edible Plant Sale**

May 5–6  
Tilth Gardens in Wallingford



Committee, which is dedicated to providing educational and social opportunities for our 500-plus volunteers. All volunteers and their guests are invited to set aside Third Thursdays, 7–9 p.m., to spend time with Tilth friends old and new.

## Celebration, Communication, Community Goals Outlined at March Annual Meeting

Karen Luetjen, Executive Director

With potluck dishes clutched in oven mitts, a small but energized group of old and new friends came out for the 2007 Annual Members Meeting on Thursday, March 8. The Squirrel Butter musical duo of Charmaine Slavin on guitar and Charlie Beck on banjo got everyone's toes tapping.

Craig Skipton, incoming board president, presided over a short meeting, where members approved the slate of officers and elected at-large board members. I highlighted 2006 activities and showed off the Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention and Sustainable Practices, made of recycled blue glass.

Craig described the recent work on a strategic plan that is nearly ready for adoption, and Beth Lenholt outlined goals of the new board-level Volunteer Committee, which seeks to benefit Tilth's hundreds of volunteers. Beth announced the revival of "Tilth Third Thursday" monthly programs, designed to be both fun and educational. Andrea Tousignant, who is chairing the new Communications Committee, walked members through a brief survey while describing the committee's goal of improving communications strategies. A mapping project will determine the scope of Tilth-influenced natural gardening practices among members. Nancy Evans, who is leading the 30th Anniversary Task Force, sought ideas for ways to celebrate Seattle Tilth's birthday in 2008.

Thanks to everyone who brought food to share and who helped stage our annual meeting.

## Transitions



Emily Bishton and Emi Morgan are the newest Seattle Tilth staffers. Emily is now an environmental educator for the Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline and will be launching the Hotline's new Saturday hours. She previously worked as a contract educator in our Children's Garden. Emi Morgan is filling a new role at Tilth as program assistant, covering class registrations, membership and volunteer coordination. Emi is currently working on

her MBA in Sustainable Business from the Bainbridge Graduate Institute.

### Interested in serving on the Tilth Board of Directors?

Call Karen at 206-632-1999 for details.

Seattle Tilth Association is a non-profit organization and an urban chapter within Tilth's regional network.

#### Our Mission Statement

Seattle Tilth inspires and educates people to garden organically, conserve natural resources, and support local food systems in order to cultivate a healthy urban environment and community.

#### Board of Directors

Sara Coulter  
Justine Dell'Aringa  
Nancy Evans  
Vice President Willi Evans Galloway  
Eric King  
Beth Lenholt  
Treasurer Brandon Pemberton  
Renee Rhone  
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#### Staff Members

Emily Bishton *Natural Soil Building Program (NSB)*  
Lorraine Brooks *Natural Soil Building Program*  
Liza Burke *Natural Soil Building Program*  
Andrea Cummins *Natural Soil Building Program*  
Kathy Dang *Demonstration Garden Coordinator*  
Karen Luetjen *Executive Director*  
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Amy Ockerlander *Natural Soil Building Program*  
Colleen Quinn *Manager, NSB Program*  
Angelina Shell *MC/SB Volunteer Coordinator*  
Lisa Taylor *Children's Garden Coordinator*

#### Office Hours and Phones

Monday–Friday, 10 am–5 pm or by appointment  
206-633-0451 Office Phone  
206-633-0450 Fax  
206-632-1999 Executive Director  
206-633-0224 Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline  
206-633-0097 Master Composters/Soil Builders  
206-633-5045 Volunteer Line

#### Web site

[www.seattletilth.org](http://www.seattletilth.org)

#### E-mail

Send to [firstname.lastname@seattletilth.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@seattletilth.org)

#### Address

Seattle Tilth Association, 4649 Sunnyside Avenue North, Room 120, Seattle, Washington 98103

#### Seattle Tilth Newsletter

Bill Thorness *Editor*  
Keala Hagmann *Design/Production*

The Seattle Tilth Newsletter is published by the Seattle Tilth Association. Readers are encouraged to submit articles, ideas for articles, original artwork, and other commentary. All material should be mailed c/o The Newsletter to the address above or e-mailed to [karenluetjen@seattletilth.org](mailto:karenluetjen@seattletilth.org). Submissions will be printed as space allows. Seattle Tilth reserves the right to edit for interest, length, and style.

#### Tilth \ˈtilth\ n

[ME, fr. OE, fr. *tilian* to till]

(bef. 12c) 1 : the quality

of cultivated soil

2 : the cultivation of wisdom

and the spirit

## Digging Deeper

*Craig Skipton, Board president*

Working on Seattle Tilth's strategic plan has been a lot like planting peas with a two year old. Sure, it's easy to look over the surface and poke a seed in with your finger to the right depth. But it is a whole lot more fun to dig a little bit deeper ... and deeper and still deeper. As you're digging, you're flinging stuff this way and that and, yes, getting completely and totally immersed and covered from head to toe.

It's a messy job, but it is a whole lot of fun, too! The board and staff have devoted hours and hours over the past eight months to a new strategic plan for the organization, which has been tenderly cared for, well watered, and is now taking root.

Over the next few months, you'll hear much more about the strategic plan from us, and I hope that any member who wants to know more or help out will discuss this important work with me or with our executive director, Karen. For now, let me tell you about two areas of focus:

- We are restating our priorities with this overriding goal: To create an organic and sustainable urban area that supports the health and well being of its residents (people, flora and fauna).
- We are focusing on four P's: programs, people, partnerships and public relations.

Just like a new seed sprouting, we're starting this work by digging in and establishing new roots. I've found that such work has a long tradition at Tilth. As part of long-range planning research, I had the opportunity to read a letter from Wendell Berry to Bob Stilger and Gigi Coe dated July 4, 1974. This incredible letter of encouragement, which came from a Spokane conference where Wendell was the keynote speaker, spurred readers to create the Tilth movement. Berry talks about creating a vision for the future that brings together people, the land and teachings about the land. These are essentially our roots.

I am very excited by the great work on the strategic plan and look forward to sharing it with you. I am also very excited to be the next board president. We have a great group of individuals on the board who are excited and energized by the coalescing of an organizational vision.

I expect 2007 to be a great year, with lots of new energy, new opportunities and a whole lot of peas.

*Editor's note: Want to read Wendell Berry's letter? It's on the Web site of Tilth Producers, at this link: [www.tilthproducers.org/berry1974-2.htm](http://www.tilthproducers.org/berry1974-2.htm).*



Board members Willi Galloway, Brandon Pemberton and Nancy Evans (left to right) welcome Brandon's daughter Lily to Seattle Tilth's 2007 annual meeting.



At the annual meeting, members placed a dot on a large Seattle map and listed their garden's square footage to help us begin to calculate Seattle Tilth's "footprint" in the community. Add your garden to the map at the upcoming Plant Sale.

## Learn, Share Wild Edibles In New Tilth Pod

Arthur Lee Jacobson

Most Tilth members enjoy gardening. But some, who are not content to stop there, also enjoy gathering wild edible plants. This practice goes far beyond blackberries. Every season (and habitat) offers a different menu. In winter the main fare is roots, leftover nuts and berries. Spring provides the maximum array of salad material. Summer is profuse with edible flowers, berries and annual edibles. October bears more fruit than any other month, plus a resurrection of salads when rain resumes.

There is much to learn and to eat. My library has 47 books about edible plants. Hiking the Mount Townsend Trail one fall I ate 16 different species of berries. One July I gathered 30 plant species for a salad in northern California's Siskiyou Mountains. In Seattle I easily make salads

## Tilth in the News

Mentions of Seattle Tilth and its organic gardening education appeared in two regional publications recently.

*Seattle Magazine's* March 2007 cover package, "The Green Guide," included an article called "Garden Green," which urged techniques that are organic and sustainable. The list included building healthy soil, rejecting synthetic pesticides and reducing water waste, all of which offered advice from Seattle Tilth. The article also recommends our *Maritime Northwest Garden Guide*.

In "Organicize Me," a *Seattle Weekly* writer decided to spend a month eating only organic food (a twist on the movie "Super Size Me," in which the filmmaker ate only at McDonald's for a month). In the Feb. 21 article, Tilth's Karen Luetjen was quoted extolling the virtues of kale, and one of Tilth's founders, Mark Musick, discussed community supported agriculture.

If you see Seattle Tilth mentioned in the media, let us know. Drop a line to [karenluetjen@seattletilth.org](mailto:karenluetjen@seattletilth.org), or call her at 206-632-1999.

of 100 or more different kinds of plants – mixing wild and cultivated.

The hard thing for most people is not the cooking or eating of wild plants, but rather getting up the nerve to go harvest them. It takes overcoming feelings of hesitation or self-consciousness typical of trying unfamiliar activities. It also takes time to build up a comfort threshold for eating wild plants. And beginners must learn from experienced foragers.

To help all of us who know and care about this realm – or who do not know but desire to – Jean Gauthier and I propose that we get acquainted. Our Wild Edibles Tilth Pod can hold potlucks, share favorite books or recipes, and share knowledge about wild edibles. Whether you care about urban wilds only or are also seeking wilderness haunts, you are welcome. We envision holding a get-together in late May. To express your interest, please contact me at 206-328-8733 or [ALJ@consultant.com](mailto:ALJ@consultant.com), or Jean at [jeangaut@comcast.net](mailto:jeangaut@comcast.net).

## Contribute to Flood Relief Effort for Hmong Farmers

Ian Taylor

Two Seattle Tilth members, Jim Beyer and me, and our neighbors are working to help one of the Hmong farming families along the Snoqualmie River whose livelihoods and households were devastated by this winter's floods. Food and personal items have been secured, but we are putting out a call for dahlia or peony tubers. We also are gathering vegetable seeds for immediate planting in their greenhouse. Donations of tubers and seeds may be left outside the Seattle Tilth main office, Room 120 of the Good Shepherd Center in Wallingford.

To help raise funds for the family we are also pre-selling \$10 bouquets, five at a time (\$50 total), which will be delivered to buyers every other week during 10 weeks of the summer flower harvest.

Monetary donations to purchase seeds and bulbs are welcomed, as are volunteers to help in the fields.

To make contributions, pre-purchase bouquets, or for more information, please call Jim Beyer at 206-321-5136.

## Tilth in the Community

Staff, board members or volunteers represented Seattle Tilth at the annual meeting of **Washington Tilth Association** this winter, at a meeting of the **Acting Food Policy Council**, at the **Farmer-Chef Connection Conference** and at the **Chefs Collaborative** event at Tilth Restaurant.

Gardeners at **Magnuson, Cascade and Marra Farm P-Patches** learned organic growing techniques from Tilth staff. We also taught at the **Lake Forest Park Rotary Club, Northwest Flower & Garden Show, Safeco Neighborhood Academy, Sky Nursery, Swansons Nursery** and **Starbucks Lunch and Learn**.



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# Grow Your Knowledge at Tilth Spring Gardening Programs

## Comprehensive Organic Gardener Program

*Bradner Gardens Park, April 11–May 1  
(Wednesdays and Saturdays)*

The Comprehensive Organic Gardener (COG) Program is an intensive, four-week course teaching organic vegetable gardening methods and practices. The curriculum merges scientific and practical information with an emphasis on experiential learning and hands-on practice. This unique and popular course is designed to give beginning gardeners an introduction into the dynamic world of organic gardening and an opportunity to get their hands dirty in the process.

Cost: \$235 / \$205 for Tilth members

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## How to Register

Classes require advance registration. Print, fill out, and mail the registration form available on our Web site at [www.seattletilth.org](http://www.seattletilth.org)

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## City Chickens 101

*Saturday, April 21, 10 am–12:30 pm  
Good Shepherd Center, Room 140 (Senior Center)*

*Also offered Saturday, May 19 at the Youngstown Cultural Arts Center in the Delridge neighborhood of West Seattle.*

You will learn the most important considerations in caring for a small flock of hens in limited space, including chicken physiology, behavior, health, nutrition, housing and city regulations. This class also covers the wide variety of chicken breeds. Questions are encouraged. You will leave this class with everything you need to know to start raising chickens in your own backyard. This class will be too advanced for children under 10.

Cost: \$32 / 25 for Tilth members

## Biointensive Gardening – Growing the Most in a Small Space

*Sunday, April 22, 11 am–12:30 pm  
Bradner Gardens Park*

Urban vegetable growers often have limited space for their gardens. This shouldn't prevent you from growing everything you want and

feeding your family. Biointensive gardening is an organic technique that focuses on getting the most out of a small space. This clinic will focus on how to prepare the soil by double digging, bed layout, plant spacing, and planting. Learn to use your space effectively—we'll show you how!

Cost: \$20 / 15 for Tilth members

## Let's Get Growing: Planting Your Schoolyard Garden

*Tuesday, May 1, 3–5 pm  
Thurgood Marshall Elementary  
2401 S. Irving Street, Seattle*

Join Lisa Taylor, Seattle Tilth Children's Garden Coordinator, in a fun, hands-on workshop that will help teachers, volunteer coordinators and parents to get the most out of a schoolyard garden. Learn how to structure gardening sessions, work outside, use tools, teach worm bin and composting basics, plan how and what to plant, and other "tried and true" methods of gardening with children.

Cost: Free, but pre-registration is required. To register, call Gretchen DeDecker at 206-252-0637 or e-mail [gdedecker@seattleschools.org](mailto:gdedecker@seattleschools.org).

## Grow More in a Small Space – Intensive Two-day Workshop

*Thursday, May 17, 6:30–9 pm and Saturday, May 19, 10 am–2:30 pm  
Bradner Gardens Park*

This two-day intensive is designed for people who want to maximize the use of their small garden plots. Whether you have a community garden plot or a small urban lot, the Tilth gardeners will show you techniques to double or triple your harvest compared to conventional techniques. Participants will get ideas for basic garden planning and learn several planting techniques for vegetables and herbs. Students will also learn about vertical gardening, will learn which vegetables can be grown on a trellis and will have a chance to construct different garden trellises. Each student also will receive a garden kit with seeds selected by the Tilth gardeners especially for our climate.

Cost: \$75 / \$65 for Tilth members, plus a \$10 materials fee payable at first class.

## Creating Garden Harmony: a Permaculture Workshop for the Urban Dweller

*Thursday, June 7, 6:30–8:30 pm; Saturday, June 9 and Sunday, June 10, 10 am–3 pm*

## Good Shepherd Center Demonstration Garden

This three-day workshop will provide participants with an introduction to permaculture and offer skills for interpreting and applying these principles in an urban setting. Participants will have the opportunity to create hands-on permaculture garden projects that offer the skills and experience needed to replicate them in their backyard. Topics include garden planning, natural patterns in the garden, inviting wildlife into the garden, and plant and people communities. This course is designed to inspire the city gardener to think and act more permaculturally and to provide resources for making further connections related to permaculture in the Seattle community.

Cost: \$135 / \$115 for Tilth members

## Come to Shop, Then Learn

### At Edible Plant Sale Clinics

#### Permaculture: Cultivating Plant Communities in Your Garden

*Saturday, May 5, 10–11 am and Sunday, May 6, 12:30–1:30 pm*

*Good Shepherd Center Demonstration Garden*  
This clinic will show you how to plant your spring and summer vegetable garden using planting techniques found in nature that will maximize your harvest and add diversity and beauty to your site. Topics include interplanting, succession planting, companion planting, polycultures and plant guilds. This class will introduce the concept of creating a food forest in your backyard and will give you the skills to start right away.

Cost: \$12 / \$10 for Tilth members

#### Culinary Herb Gardening

*Saturday, May 5, 12–1 pm and Sunday, May 6, 11 am–12 pm*

*Good Shepherd Center Demonstration Garden*  
Whether you're interested in growing basil for pesto, cilantro for salsas or mint for summer iced tea, this workshop will teach you how to grow fresh kitchen herbs all season long. Topics include planning your herb garden and selecting the best varieties for your site. We'll also show you a simple herb spiral, which you can easily create right outside your kitchen door that will keep fresh herbs at your fingertips all summer long. Attend this fun workshop to learn more about growing culinary herbs at home and buy your plant starts at Tilth's Edible Plant Sale while you're here.

Cost: \$12 / \$10 for Tilth members



## Naked Gardener: Woven Together

To settle some disputes that arose between us regarding the trees in our suburban garden, my wife and I retained the services of a locally-famous expert on woody plants. He came, he saw, he pondered. About our trees, I mean. His careful, arthury advice was that whereas the Madrona looked healthy and could stay (score 1 for me), the ragged rank of three assorted conifers was an arboreal disgrace, the trees were sickly and should go (score 3 for my wife). The fine Deodar Cedar, being in good condition, was a definite keeper (but no points to either side, as we both agreed on this anyway).

Next we had to deal with my age-old yearning to prove my manhood by engaging destructively with trees. In other words, to become a weekend logger. I was asked to consider my age (advanced), and persuaded that my life-blood (precious) is better spent sustaining gainful employment than being spilled amidst splinters and sawdust, as it surely would be if I attempted the work myself.

So better counsel prevailed and we contracted with a company of woodsmen for the felling, chipping, and stump grinding of the targeted trees. We thought that while they were here, those woodsmen might as well also take out a row of unpleasant *Photinia fraseri*, both the filberts (chew on **that** Squirrel Fatso, you nasty rodent), and two of the three trunks of the black locust—the ones that threatened to come crashing down into our neighbor's property some exciting, windy day.

All of this hacking and racking of the growing green might give the impression that we are clear-cutting our lot but never fear, we are re-planting with beautiful, modest-sized, and—we hope—well-behaved deciduous trees and assorted shrubs which will restore the woodland atmosphere in but a few short years.

None of this replanting could happen until the ivy which covered the ground under the conifers had been attacked and removed. Now, if you didn't know, I'm here to tell you that ivy is a worthy opponent. You have to go at it with all the strength, tools, and tenacity you can bring to bear or it will defeat you. Such a contest breeds respect—at least it does on my part. I don't really know how the ivy feels about me, but I found myself reluctant to simply discard the long, tough, fibrous roots and runners I was heaving out of the soil.

Now if you've got a supply of supple, fibrous material of sufficient length the obvious thing to do is weave yourself a basket. So that's what I set about doing.

I'm not a basket weaver, but I did once take a class at the late, lamented School of Basketry in Fremont. It was a lovely experience. Once we'd been taught the fundamentals, it was a matter of sitting around in a group weaving and chatting. Since the students were predominantly women, the conversation became theirs, interspersed with a rare male comment or grunt. I began to feel part of an ancient scene: women friends and neighbors doing their handwork together, gossiping, complaining, supporting each other, and laughing. And there was a lot of laughter, especially as the conversation turned ribald. There was more than basketry to learn that day.

So along with a somewhat raised consciousness I acquired just one basketry technique, which I now applied to my harvested ivy, weaving it around ribs of hazel withies and other flexible rods cut from the garden. Lack of skill and practice led me to produce a much bigger result than I expected, and in fact it's still under construction and there is no end in sight. It's clearly not going to be a basket of any useful shape or size, so I've declared it **Garden Art** instead. Perhaps a family of raccoons will take up residence in it.

There's still ivy to remove. I take a run at it each weekend, and little by little the ground is becoming clear. When I'm tired of that, I sit and weave. In those quiet, reflective moments I recognize that, when it comes down to it, I'd much rather be creative with ivy than destructive with trees anyway; and I also think about those

women, our lives woven together for that brief time, and the lessons I learned that day, and since.

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**Wanna Be Farmer Seminars Free:** 2:00 p.m. every third Sat., April–September at Jubilee Farm in Carnation, WA. Pursue your dream and tour the farm. To register, call 206-963-8196 or email [paul@dreamdrafters.com](mailto:paul@dreamdrafters.com). Paul is a lifelong farmer, educator and now a buyer's agent with Dream Drafters Realty in Everett.

## Join Seattle Tilth!

New Member  Renewing Member  New contact information?

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership levels**    \$30 Regular    \$50 Supporter  
 \$100 Sustaining    \$500 Lifetime    \$15 Limited Income

**Adopt-A-Program** Yes, I would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to support Seattle Tilth operations.

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### Maritime Northwest Garden Guide

For an indispensable regional guide to year-round gardening enclose \$12.50 (includes tax and postage) per copy. Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies.

**Mail to** Seattle Tilth, 4649 Sunnyside Ave N,  
Room 120, Seattle, Washington 98103



## Hot Questions from the Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline

Contact the Hotline at 206-633-0224 or [info@lawnandgardenhotline.org](mailto:info@lawnandgardenhotline.org).

*There seems to be an aphid explosion in my garden this spring; what can I spray to get rid of them?*

Believe it or not, a good blast of water from your garden hose may be enough to keep the aphid population in check.

Aphids are soft-bodied insects that suck plant juices, causing the disfigurement of emerging leaves or the wilting of new tip growth. Their populations are especially high in the spring when lush new growth in the garden provides a wealth of soft plant tissue that they just love. Use the fine setting on your hose nozzle or remove the wand on a wand sprayer and use the on/off spray controller. This will produce a spray that is intense enough to knock off and kill most aphids on contact, but gentle enough to not harm tender plant tissue. Aphids that have been blasted off but not killed have a hard time finding their way back to your plants.

Be sure to spray plants susceptible to powdery mildew or other fungal leaf spots in the morning so the water on the leaves has a chance to evaporate in the warmth of the day.

Repeat the spraying process each morning for a few days and you will notice a huge reduction in aphid numbers. Also, use this time to observe all your plants: are there particular specimens that seem to be more infested with aphids than others? Aphids are notorious indicators of plant stress: they often gang up on plants that are not getting enough moisture or are planted in too much sun. Fixing the

cultural situation often will prevent future problems.

*I can't wait to start my summer vegetable garden. When do I plant my tomatoes, peppers and basil? I'd also like to start some squash as well, and I want to get a head start!*

Heat-loving summer veggie plants are starting to show up in nurseries and grocery stores, and certainly a great selection can be found at Seattle Tilth's Edible Plant Sale the first weekend in May. As tempting as it is to set them out right away, these plants will not thrive until our soils warm up and nighttime temperatures consistently stay above 50 degrees. This can be as early as mid-May or as late as mid-June.

Transplanting your starts to the next larger container may keep them growing. Be sure to provide plenty of light. Before placement in your garden, plants need to be "hardened off," which will take a week. This acclimatizes them to the harsher outdoor environment by slowly exposing them to daytime temperatures. They can be brought indoors at night, or left outdoors under a protective structure, such as a cold frame or a cloche. Tomatoes, pep-

pers and basil can be planted out as early as mid-May or early June with protection from a cloche (which needs to be vented during warm days) or by using the heat-trapping "Wall o' Water" devices. You can safely plant them without protection in late June.

Summer and winter squash, zucchini and cucumbers can all be planted from seed in the garden in May. If you sow the seeds under a cloche, you will not only aid germination but also ensure that the young seedlings are protected from the occasional cold spell that can still occur until arrival of consistently warmer weather in June.

info@lawnandgardenhotline.org  
206.633.0224

**Natural Lawn  
& Garden Hotline**

Free expert advice tailored to the  
home gardener and landscape professional

*What can I do to help ensure that my garden doesn't suffer drought stress during the hot, dry summer months?*

You are wise to be thinking ahead, because most vegetables and fruits need regular watering during hot weather to

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# Seattle Tilth

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## Edible Plant Sale Crew Looking for Many Hands

The proverb “many hands make light work” is especially true for a big event like the Tilth Edible Plant Sale, to be staged May 5–6. The weekend sale has become an annual rite of spring for Seattle gardeners, and many volunteers are needed to help them get their fix of veggie and herb starts.

All sorts of volunteer jobs exist:

- April 30–May 4 – The week before the sale, volunteer tasks include sign making, tagging and labeling plants, and setting up tents and tables.
- May 5–6 – During the sale weekend, help is needed to staff the sale with greeters, plant sellers, ticket writers, cashiers and more. No plant expertise necessary!

If you can help, check the volunteer section of our Web site, or call our volunteer line at 206-633-5045, ext. 1

## Hot Questions

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produce tasty crops. Even ornamental plants that are considered drought-tolerant need regular watering for their first couple of years while their roots systems become well-established, and occasional watering thereafter.

The most efficient way to water is to install soaker hoses or a simple drip irrigation system, both of which direct water only to the root zone of your plants. Soaker hoses are easy to install, and are a good alternative when you want to deliver water at the same rate throughout your garden. One advantage of a drip irrigation system is that you can more easily re-route the lines when you rotate vegetable crops, or reduce the flow from emitters when ornamental plants have become well-established.

Setting up a watering system with soaker hoses or drip irrigation will allow you to kick back and enjoy the hot weather without spending your free time with a garden hose in your hand. Contact the Hotline to request a fact sheet on soaker hoses or drip irrigation.

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## Calvin Creasey : GARDENER

*Free consultation for Tilth members*  
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*The best plants, grandly grown*