

# Seattle Tilth

ORGANIC GARDENING • URBAN ECOLOGY • COMPOSTING • RECYCLING



VOL 30 NO 6 • DEC 2007/JAN 2008

**TILTH TRACTOR PULL**  
Monday, December 10  
7 pm, Tractor Tavern  
\$12 advance \$15 at door,  
available at [ticketweb.com](http://ticketweb.com)

## Seattle Tilth Turns 30

Early in 1978, Seattle Tilth became an urban chapter in a young regional movement focused on alternative agriculture and a concept called “organics.” That organizing effort went through many phases and growing pains to become the regional resource that Seattle Tilth is today. As the organization enters its 30th year, we will be sharing many stories of its history, celebrating its accomplishments and challenging ourselves to remain relevant to our mission in the years to come.

Although a good urban farmer might put all her eggs in one basket on the way to the kitchen, it did not seem appropriate for an anniversary of this magnitude. So, rather than planning one event to commemorate our 30th year, we’re holding seven! Thanks to Nancy Evans and a special events team, we have celebrations on the calendar that range from reunions to reimaging. A summer Children’s Garden picnic, ribbon-cutting on our garden redesign and a benefit concert are in the works. Below are the first two anniversary events. Join us!

### Seattle Tilth Reunion Dinner & Annual Meeting

Thursday, Jan. 24, 6:30 p.m.

Good Shepherd Center Chapel

A reunion for Tilth founders, volunteers, members and staff to celebrate the value and impact of Seattle Tilth’s efforts, growth and community impact.

### Seattle Tilth: Inspiring Edible Landscapes for 30 Years

Thursday, March 13, 7 p.m.

Town Hall Seattle

An inspirational keynote speaker, sponsors and other details will be released soon. Meanwhile, save the date!

## Support Our Annual Fund

There has never been a better time to help Seattle Tilth make a difference. Donating to our annual fund now will help to leverage our growth and outreach precisely at a time when organics and sustainability are so much in the news that many more people are receptive to our message.

Recently, members received an appeal in the mail for donations to Tilth’s Annual Fund, but do you know where your dollars go? Annual Fund money supports general operations, which means keeping our talented staff active in pursuing our mission. Much of our grant and program funding is earmarked for specific efforts, so general operations funding is the glue that holds it all together and helps enhance community outreach. For instance:

- Your memberships and donations have helped us in offering events and programs every month of the year.
- Your donations help us fully utilize opportunities provided by our 30th Anniversary in 2008. With three new events

and two expanded events, we will make more friends for Seattle Tilth and further increase our support base.

- Your funds also help us plan and execute improvements to our treasured demonstration and teaching gardens.

If you are a member but have never made a donation to our Annual Fund, please let this be the year that you become a Seattle Tilth donor. And if you have donated in the past, please consider a special gift this year as an investment in the next 30 years. Your donation today will help us build a strong financial base from which to continue inspiring and educating people to garden organically, conserve natural resources and support local food systems.

To make your tax-deductible donation, simply respond to the letter you received, use the membership form on page 7 of this newsletter, or send a check marked “Annual Fund” to Seattle Tilth, 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N., Room 120, Seattle, WA 98103. Thank you!

## Exceeding Our Goals, Thanks to Your Support

Karen Luetjen, Executive Director

Since this newsletter spans the end of one year and the beginning of another, it is an opportunity for me to tell you about how we are doing as an organization. In 2007, Seattle Tilth grew in many ways, continuing a recent trend.

First of all, our ambitions grew. We adopted a strategic plan with the audacious goal of transforming Seattle into the organic gardening capital of the world. Board and staff members have spent many valuable hours outlining action steps and supporting that goal with development and communications plans, and the work is currently underway.

Our fundraising grew as well, from the record-breaking Edible Plant Sale in May to increases in Harvest Fair sponsorships in September. Along the way, memberships and contributions have exceeded the goals we set for 2007, and we are projecting even more growth in our 30th Anniversary year in 2008.

Finally, our team has the strength and readiness for further growth, due to the continuity of our team members. Coordinators of each program area have worked for Tilth for at least five years, and several board members are in their second three-year term. Nothing can beat the winning combination of experienced and dedicated staff and volunteers for carrying out Tilth's important work.

When you consider your personal goals for year-end donations, we hope you will consider an investment in the growth of Seattle Tilth. You are a valued partner in this endeavor.

### Transitions

**Laura Matter** has joined the Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline, bringing a dozen years of horticulture experience from her own garden consulting business and 10 years as a gardener for Seattle City Light. Laura holds a degree in Botany from the University of Washington. She continues to work at Swanson's Nursery, where she helps on the info desk, and also serves as the site coordinator for the Picardo Farm P-Patch.

**Sam O'Brien** has returned to his home in Minnesota, after working as Children's Garden Assistant since March 2006. Sam was the volunteer coordinator for the CG and helped develop the performances for last year's Northwest Flower & Garden Show. He also made significant infrastructure improvements by spearheading the remodeling of our garden office and building new benches for the Children's Garden. His teaching talent, wonderful warmth and humor are sorely missed.

### Correction:

A "Friend of the Harvest Fair" was overlooked in our last issue. Thanks to Lopez Island Vineyards for donating wine for the Eat Local Thanksgiving display.



### Join the Compost Team

*Ever wondered how to shrink your carbon footprint by reducing the amount of waste you put into the garbage? Become a Master Composter/Soil Builder and learn about composting yard and food wastes, building healthy soils, curbing global warming, conserving water and creating beautiful, pest-free landscapes. Learn how to share this information effectively with the public. Receive in-depth, free training and do 40 hours of community outreach in return. All Seattle city residents are invited to take part. The four-week training takes place in March, with advanced training in the fall. Applications, due by Feb. 22, are available on our Web site or by calling 206-633-0097.*

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.*

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### 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*  
Sarah Kulfan *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** \ˈtɪlθ\ n [ME, fr. OE, fr. *tilian* to till]  
(bef. 12c) 1: quality of cultivated soil  
2: cultivation of wisdom and the spirit



## Tilth@30: Vigorous Through Energy of Volunteers

By Bill Thorness

*Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of articles on Seattle Tilth history to commemorate our 30th anniversary. Future articles will profile staff, gardens, programs and the origin of the organization.*

"Tilth runs on the willingness of people to work," said Meg Ford in 1984, although it could have been said by almost any staff, leader or active volunteer any time over the last 30 years. Seattle Tilth has always been a community of doers, people sharing the vision of a greener city fueled by learning and teaching the natural ways of gardening and feeding ourselves.

Ford was an early volunteer and member of the Steering Committee (now known as the Board of Directors). Leadership was one of many duties accomplished by volunteers over the decades.

A series of gardeners, from enthusiasts to experts, developed our "Urban Agriculture Center." Staff gardeners, along with many people employed by Tilth, put in many volunteer hours themselves. Carl Woestendiek (now Woestwin) led that tradition. A founder of Seattle Tilth, he broke the ground that is now the Wallingford demonstration garden. Gil Schieber, grounds-keeper at the Center for many years, also was an early volunteer and plant sale organizer. Others include Robin Stern, first author of the Maritime Northwest Garden Guide, and gardeners like Judy Sarkisian, who was "very enthusiastic, funny, reliable and hardworking," recalls Joanne Jewell, former Tilth garden coordinator.

Composting has always been a driving factor in creating gardens and building organization. Steve Worthman was the first composter. Woestwin, Jeff Gage and Craig Benton started the Master Composter program in 1985. The composting program has since produced hundreds of trained educators, including Ian Taylor, who taught Tilth classes for many years, served on the board and writes the Naked Gardener column.

### Remembering Jeff Fairhall

Longtime volunteer and supporter of Seattle Tilth, local entrepreneur Jeff Fairhall, passed away Sept. 5 at the age of 49 from brain cancer. He was remembered by many Tilth friends at a memorial service on Sept. 23.

Jeff started Essential Foods in 1988, selling healthy, deli-case wraps—vegetarian and made with organic, local ingredients where possible. In 1994 he opened Essential Baking Co., and more recently had purchased the old Red Hook Brewery and partnered in the firm Theo Chocolates.

His bread and sandwiches fed many Tilth volunteers, due to his company's donations. He also provided trucks, staff and organizational ability to help Tilth operate its early Harvest Fairs on a shoestring. He opened his industrial kitchen for Tilth holiday parties, and his company was a generous financial sponsor.

Friends remember Jeff as a sharp-minded man who envisioned solutions, and was always looking ahead. He was committed to local farming, socially engaged ventures and the environment. "He was passionate about healthy food and how it relates to how we live," said friend and former Tilth board member Susan Ernsdorff to The Seattle Times.

Seattle Tilth and PCC Farmland Trust were named as memorial beneficiaries by Jeff's family.



The 1991 Harvest Fair committee included, from left, front row: Dave Barden, Julie Bryan, Mark Musick and Jeff Fairhall. Back row: Carl Elliott, Jude Rubin, Joyce Rubin, Bill Thorness and Bejurin Cassady.

Volunteer accountants, such as Steve Wilson, Jeff Anderson, Jean Edelhertz and Mike Ewanciw, have overseen financial matters. Dave Barden helped bring Tilth into the personal computer age, and Steve Tracy managed the first Tilth Web site.

Leadership of the board has been held by David Johnson, Howard Stenn, Carol Dahl, Phil Megenhardt and Neal Thayer, among others. Former garden coordinators Rob Peterson and Carl Elliott recall the efforts of Julie Bryan, who led Tilth during a period of change before hiring an executive director. "Julie built a real strong sense of community," Peterson says. "She did a lot of unglamorous, nuts-and-bolts work, and was able to be inspiring, bringing people together."

Familiar faces pop up like perennial plants. One is Norm Tjaden, "still a volunteer after 25-plus years," says former board president Arthur Lee Jacobson. Attorney Jim Roe is another. Elliott says Roe is "always fun to be around. He'd show up on a Saturday and move rocks... but also rework the entire contract with the city and redo our bylaws."

Ted Jesson, an artist who lived on the fourth floor of the Center building, designed and built the brick-and-stone main pathway through the garden. "He reclaimed all the old bricks from the Good

Continued on page 5



## Tilth Holds a Sensational Sustainable Soiree

Led by event chair Justine Dell'Aringa, the Soiree team put on a great party on October 4 at Golden Gardens Bathhouse. Sponsors Herban Feast and Badger Mountain Winery added to the atmosphere of plenty with buffet tables and bar featuring souvenir wine glasses. Old friends and new friends met over cocktail tables with flickering candles and seasonal decorations of pumpkins and winter squash. Others hovered around bid sheets for the silent auction, which featured more than 100 donated items and services, some grouped into unique gift packages, such as the Local Vegetarian Cooking Kit and the Chicken Starter Package.

Lively conversation and music by Trio A' Propos and Zazou entertained the attendees. Board President Craig Skipton, speaking in a brief program, outlined the events for Tilth's 30th Anniversary. Children's Garden Coordinator Lisa Taylor led a "paddle raise" to match grant funds for Wallingford teaching garden improvements. Over \$15,000 was raised by the event, due to the generous donations and, most of all, to 121 people who attended. Thank you!



## Thanks to Our Soiree Contributors

### Soiree Team

Justine Dell'Aringa,  
Chair  
Jaime Beckland  
Renee Dodds  
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Jennifer Carlson

## Seattle Tilth Turns 30

*Continued from page 1*

Shepherd Center," says Stenn. "I remember him tossing them out of a fourth floor window."

Valerie Tims provided organizational skills, Cheryl Teague contributed garden design, Johnson and Steve Whitney led the greenhouse construction, and Jacobson taught about weeds, writing a "Weed of the Month" newsletter column for many years and tending a demonstration weed bed, with each plant clearly identified. Mark Musick, a founder of the regional Tilth organization prior to Seattle Tilth's inception, has inspired numerous leaders.

So many people – 5,000 would be a conservative estimate – have made Seattle Tilth into a leading community organization. Entering our fourth decade, amazing volunteers are still leading Tilth. Join the Jan. 24 reunion dinner to meet past and present volunteers and celebrate our work.



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## Naked Gardener: The Six Earthly Satisfactions

The restorative benefits of gardening are the subject of some study and much anecdotal evidence, but for those of us who actually do it they are a matter of direct personal experience. For the amateurs among us, that is. While I admire and respect professional gardeners, I cannot believe they feel the same pleasure felt by those for whom the work is an avocation, and a relief from the day job.

The satisfactions of gardening are many and you don't need me to tell you what they are, but I'm going to anyway because you might be entertained, and I might learn something in the process (I'm not kidding: you try writing 635 words on a subject you think you know something about and see what you learn.)

### Satisfaction # 1: Playing Outside (without a film crew)

There's no way to garden indoors; not really. Spending time physically engaged with the outdoors appears to be a big-time pursuit in the U.S., if you believe the ads you see. But I'm convinced that many of those folks are more interested in their colorful, high-tech gear than in direct contact with the world around them. Gardeners are in direct contact with the world around them: there's no other way to do it. Which leads to...

### Satisfaction # 2: Mud in your eye, dirt under your fingernails

The gardener works at the interplay of air, earth and water, and bathes in the wash of these elemental, um, elements. Most gardeners cannot avoid dripping sweat (often) and blood (occasionally) into the mix, enriching the whole. Fair's fair: the gardener gives and takes. An hour of work improves the garden for sure, but it also supplies a transfusion of earth energy to the gardener.

### Satisfaction # 3: Fauna

Look to the soil—invertebrates and microorganisms of astonishing variety in uncountable numbers tumble off every spade's worth of turned soil. Look out across your garden—hover flies and butterflies and bejeweled insects drone and buzz in flight, a Steller's Jay perches on the fence and screeches, a Red-shafted Flicker swoops from your Deodar Cedar into the neighbors' Hemlock (good job you were looking up), a twittering flock of Chickadees mobs the stand of firs, sounding like forty-seven sixth-graders on a school field trip.

### Satisfaction # 4: Plant Magic

I am regularly dumbfounded at the wonder that is a seed. All of that plant potential, all of that information packed into this beautiful, tight little package, waiting for the right conditions and the chance to transform itself through the magic of germination, transpiration and photosynthesis. Then follows flowering and pollination and fruiting, roots swelling below the surface—all perfectly ordinary magic that gardeners learn to appreciate and love.

### Satisfaction # 5: Food

Few satisfactions compare with that of becoming one with your produce. I love to eat from my garden and I love to feed other folks the food I've grown. The people whose pressed grape skins I compost for my garden will give me wine for my vegetables: syrah, cabernet and merlot in exchange for Delicata squash, snap peas and fava beans. We have, as they say, a good thing going.

### Satisfaction # 6. Exercise

Gird up your loins, stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood, and screw your courage to the sticking place, because it's time to turn the compost. Or perhaps it's time to do a touch of double-digging. Or maybe some ivy removal. Whatever it may be, you will raise your pulse rate beneficially and—with luck—achieve the compression of morbidity that we all deserve. Don't forget to stretch out those sinews.

Surely that's enough, but just as surely there are other gardening satisfactions I've missed. Perhaps yours are unique! I would love to hear them. Tell me about it.

## Classifieds

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### Cynthia Creasey, real estate agent

specializing in gardens that come with houses in Seattle. Call 206-276-8292, Lake & Co. Real Estate.

### Worm composting on the Eastside?

Red wigglers for sale. Call Judy, 425-868-2694, or e-mail [judy1007@comcast.net](mailto:judy1007@comcast.net).

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### Need help with your worm bin?

*Good health begins in the soil.* Worm bins are a fun, earth friendly way to recycle food, reduce waste, and produce nutrient rich plant food. I provide professional consultation on all your needs from getting started to operating an existing bin more successfully. Individual, family, school, business, workshop rates. Exceptional quality worm compost also sold. Call Barb, Wiggle Worm Farm Owner, Master Composter, 206-297-7303.

**Join Seattle Tilth!**

New Member  Renewing Member  New contact information?

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**Hot Questions from the Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline**

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

**Q: Where can I get an organically grown or otherwise “sustainable” Christmas tree?**

This is a common question on the Hotline during this time of year and a tricky one to answer. There are few, if any, local growers who sell certified organic Christmas trees, and determining which practices are “sustainable” depends on our individual perspectives. However, the first place to look for sustainability might be your own backyard! A tree or shrub in view from a main window of your home can be enjoyed in its natural outdoor setting, dressed up with lights and decorations to provide a great “welcome home” feeling and a good reason to bundle up and go outside with loved ones.

Or decorate a large house plant! In our house, we have a *Schefflera* (Umbrella Tree) that is decorated with small twinkle lights and a few ornaments. If doing this, limit the number of hours the lights are on to the reduce the possibility of drying out the plant or burning leaves. We place gifts around its fabric-covered pot.

Making wreaths or swags is another fun way to enjoy indoor greenery. Collect small boughs of fresh herbs, cedar, cypress, fir, or pine from your garden, then add interesting cones, seeds or dried flowers for a fragrant and unique decoration. Or visit one of the local farmer’s markets that are open all winter (U-District, West Seattle, Ballard and Fremont) to buy a wreath.

Buying a tree directly from a local farm is a great way to support them, and the visit can be a fun and educational family opportunity. Blue Heron Farm in Rockport is an organic farm that sells cut and potted Christmas trees, not certified organic, but grown without chemical pesticides or fertilizers.

You could purchase a living tree at a local nursery to use indoors for the holidays and then plant outside afterwards, but it will need extra care. First, be sure you have the appropriate spot and the right variety of conifer. Typical Christmas trees like Noble, Grand, and Douglas fir require full sun and can grow to over 150 feet tall. A Hinoki Cypress, Japanese Pine, Irish Yew or Hollywood Juniper might be a better choice for an urban garden. Also, choose a tree that was grown in a container, since recently dug trees will most likely be stressed and not as able to adapt to short-term indoor conditions.

Potted trees shouldn’t remain indoors for more than 10 days. The relative humidity level in most houses in the winter is usually well below what outdoor plants need to survive. As a result of low indoor humidity, problems such as mites or needle drop may arise, which

can be intensified by holiday lights. Your living tree will need regular watering while it’s in your home, so monitor the soil often. Filling bowls of water around the base of the tree will help increase humidity.

Once you are ready to plant the tree

outside, give it time to acclimate. Put it in a garage, porch or other sheltered area for a couple of days to transition from the warm house to outdoor temperatures. Then use proper transplanting techniques to plant it in your garden.

If you decide to get a cut tree, both King County and the City of Seattle have programs for recycling Christmas trees. Remove all lights and tinsel and cut to four-foot lengths. Avoid flocked trees, as they have to be disposed of in the garbage. Call the Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline with questions on these programs, proper transplanting, or any other garden topic. Enjoy the winter season! –Liza Burke, Hotline Educator



# Seattle Tilth

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## Public Programs

### Community Planning Process for Seattle Tilth's Wallingford Teaching Gardens

Thursday, Jan. 17, 7 p.m.  
Good Shepherd Center, Room 140  
(Senior Center)

Be a part of planning educational enhancements to the Urban Agriculture Center, in use since 1978, and the Children's Garden, operating since 1988. Elements under consideration are covered gathering areas, storage, signs, paths, raised beds and other elements to improve the educational function of these popular teaching spaces. UW's Neighborhood Design Build Studio will construct some improvements in Spring 2008. Supported by Seattle's Neighborhood Matching Funds Grant.

### Volunteer for the Flower & Garden Show

Seattle Tilth will have a corner booth at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show on February 20-24. If you'd like to help recruit new members and get a free ticket to the show, call Meredith Dineen at the Tilth Volunteer Line, 206-633-5045 ext.1, or email her at [mer@fs.com](mailto:mer@fs.com).

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### Tilth in Our Community

Seattle Tilth staff have recently presented to these community groups: West Seattle Garden Tour planning committee, Wallingford P-Patch Gardeners, Green Gardening Nursery Workshop at the Center for Urban Horti-

culture, Maple Leaf Garden Club, North End Flower Club, and the Lake Forest Park Health and Safety Fair.

### Seattle Tilth Wish List

- Laptops with USB ports
- LCD Projector
- Toaster oven
- Plastic bucket wheelbarrow
- Kid-sized wheelbarrows
- Garden trugs
- Corona pruners
- Hori hori gardening knives (available at AM Leonard)
- Medium-sized tarps
- Children's books on gardening
- Gift certificates to buy books for reference
- Gift certificates for hardware stores and local nurseries

### Holiday Gift-giving Ideas That Support Seattle Tilth

The holiday season has arrived, and for many of us, that means trying to find the perfect gift for our loved ones. This year, Tilth encourages you to avoid the malls and big-box stores. Think sustainability! What's more sustainable than supporting your favorite local non-profit organization? Here are some gift ideas that also support Seattle Tilth:

- Maritime Northwest Garden Guide, \$10
- Chinook Book with coupons for sustainable products and services, \$20
- Seattle Tilth Membership, \$30
- Garden Guide and Membership, \$40
- Children's Garden T-Shirt, \$10
- Seattle Tilth Fleece Vest, \$35
- Pesticide Free Zone sign, \$5.97
- Worm Factory Food-Scrap Composter, \$95
- Red Wiggler Worms, \$15

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