

Seattle Tilth

ORGANIC GARDENING • URBAN ECOLOGY • COMPOSTING • RECYCLING

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Washington State Ecology Director Jay Manning (left) and Kathleen Drew (right), Governor Christine Gregoire's Executive Policy Advisor on Sustainability, presented the Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention and Sustainable Practices to Tilth Executive Director Karen Luetjen, Board President Neal Thayer and Board Vice President Craig Skipton. Seattle Tilth was honored for its 28-year history of promoting organic gardening and urban sustainability, teaching 15,000 people each year through 300 diverse programs. Read more about the award on page 3.



The sloping sides of the swale at the corner of NW 117th St. and Second Ave NW are designed to allow stormwater from sidewalks and streets to be absorbed into groundwater rather than running off into streams.

Visit a Rain Garden This Winter

Amy Ockerlander

Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline

Living in the Puget Sound region means we are part of an amazingly beautiful watershed. There are four major creeks in the Seattle area as well as lakes, ponds and wetlands, and they all have a connection to the Sound. Many of us have taken steps to protect these water bodies by using less water and avoiding synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. But there is another vehicle for pollutants that is still prevalent and problematic: stormwater runoff.

Stormwater runoff is the water that flows into the storm drains on city streets. Most stormwater does not go through a water treatment facility like our household wastewater, which is piped through the sewer system. Instead it is channeled through a series of pipes and drains directly into the nearest creek, lake, bay or sound. In fact, water running off our roofs into pipes connected to the sewer can overload that system, resulting in overflows to the nearest body of water.

But stormwater can cause significant pollution and erosion. It can contain oil, fuel, fertilizers, herbicides, detergents, heavy metals, paint, bacteria from animal waste and soil from erosion. In other words, whatever hits the pavement goes directly to the habitat of aquatic life. Pollutants are not the only problem; the sheer volume of water can be damaging. After a big storm, runoff can rip and tear the soil away from streambeds and coastlines, wreaking havoc on important nat-
Continued on page 5

Reflecting on a Year of Success

Karen Luetjen, Executive Director

We have a lot to be grateful for this year at Seattle Tilth. We are reaching more people, finding ways to better care for our staff, and being recognized with awards and funding by our communities.

We are adding 50% more in-school programs this year, thanks to a pilot program for fourth-grade classes supported by Seattle Public Utilities (see more about this on page 3). Also, Tilth taught twice as many classes in P-Patches as last year, expanding our reach throughout the city. Our staff and board members agree that this program partnership with the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods is a continuing priority. The expansion of both children's and adult programs has allowed program coordinators to hire and train contract staff to meet the demand, enlarging the pool of talented people and positioning us for further growth.

We upgraded staff benefits this fall by enrolling in the Regence FourFront health care plan, an innovative plan that supports preventive care. For many years, Tilth has provided a reimbursement for medical coverage, but we contracted with a broker this year that could work with our small group size, and Tilth was able to step up to cover the entire premium for staff working more than 20 hours a week.

This year the Northwest Perennial Alliance selected the Teaching Peace Through Gardening Program as the beneficiary of a \$1,500 scholarship award. Depending on grant funding, Children's Garden staff teach the five-session program to up to three groups of economically disadvantaged children per year.

Receiving the Governor's Award in Pollution Prevention (see page 3) was a huge surprise, considering that the program was developed to recognize businesses that reduced or eliminated pollution. We heard that the judges realized that the program could and should recognize organizations like Tilth that help people avoid chemical fertilizers and toxic pesticides in the first place.

And the most recent good news is that the Seattle Foundation has awarded us a \$20,000 grant to support general operations. This will allow much-needed growth in administrative support to enable Tilth staff to develop new offerings, form new partnerships, make new friends and honor the longstanding Tilth community.

Congratulations to all of our staff, volunteers, members and supporters for your part in this successful year.

Transitions

Thanks to **Keala Hagmann**, who served as office assistant for two years. Keala is leaving to focus on her studies at the UW College of Forest Resources. She will continue to handle design and production for the newsletter. **Liz Katz** is leaving her position as a Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline educator to revisit her techie roots at Amazon. Among her many contributions, Liz designed a greatly improved database for the Hotline.

Bill Thorness has been named editor of the Seattle Tilth Newsletter. Bill is a long-time Tilth member, and a former member and president of the Board of Directors. He also served on the Harvest Fair organizing committee for many years, was a member of the newsletter's



editorial advisory board, and has been an editor or advisor on Tilth's publications, grants and contract applications. Bill is a freelance writer and editor whose work can be seen at www.billthorness.com.

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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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

Website

www.seattletilth.org

Email

Send to firstname.lastname@seattletilth.org

Address

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Seattle Tilth Newsletter

Editor Bill Thorness

Design & Production Keala Hagmann

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. 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 : the quality
 of cultivated soil
 2 : the cultivation of wisdom
 and the spirit



The leaves and petals collected by this summer camper will make a refreshing sun tea.

Children's Garden Season 2006: Singing Songs Old and New

Lisa Taylor and Sam O'Brien

As the rain falls and the first frost hangs on the kiwi, summer is a brilliant memory in the Seattle Tilth Children's Garden. Spring and fall tours were packed with hands-on activities and tons of garden fun. Summer day camps were bursting with flower smelling, plant munching, little gardener friends and many of their parents. Our Teaching Peace Through Gardening program at Thurgood Marshall Elementary has been exceptional this year, teaching 30 students how to plant seeds and grow food. Smiling children, amazing volunteers, slimy creatures and sun tea – we hold these shining images in mind as we make great plans for the 2007 season!

Join us for some great garden fun during Earth Steward Tours and Summer Camps. We are excited to be debuting our new classroom program for fourth-graders. "Waste Not Want Not" is a curriculum that explores the resource stream and the choices we make about where our waste goes (we even created an original board game!).

Come and see us teaching and singing about bugs and slugs at the Northwest Flower and Garden Show on Saturday, February 17 or Sunday, February 18 at 10 am and 1 pm each day on the Sprout Stage. (For more information, see www.gardenshow.com.)

We hope to see many of our friends at a tour or camp in 2007. Check our website in January for a listing of summer programs. Also, call us to schedule a field trip for your child's classroom to the Children's Garden.

Be well and wiggly!

Governor Honors Tilth for Ecological Sustainability

Winners of the 15th annual Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention and Sustainable Practices reduced or even eliminated their use of toxic materials, applied key principles of sustainability, and conserved resources that otherwise would have been consumed. Seattle Tilth was among this year's honorees.

"These organizations are not only achieving outstanding bottom-line results through their pollution prevention efforts, but they are helping to move Washington forward in a competitive global economy," said State Department of Ecology Director Jay Manning. "To compete successfully, Washington needs clean water, air and soil, and healthy people, communities and workplaces." He added that "one of our most important competitive advantages in the global economy is that we are recognized as the clean, green corner of the United States. Business practices that this year's award winners are using are helping to secure our place in the world economy."

Winners were selected by a panel of judges from state and federal government, higher education, labor, environmental groups, and past winners. Tilth and the five businesses below join 93 past winners that changed their operations, found alternative materials, and committed to sustainable practices.

The other 2006 winners are:

Sleeping Lady Mountain Retreat, Leavenworth, recipient of the Continuing Excellence Award, for promoting sustainable practices in the hospitality industry, conserving water, energy and materials, and protecting the biodiversity of its location.

Dentistry Northwest, Port Hadlock, for eliminating its use of mercury and other toxics, protecting water quality, and conserving water.

Frito-Lay, Inc., Vancouver, for reducing its use of toxics, conserving 50 million gallons of water each year, promoting sustainable practices throughout its workforce, and supporting environmental protection in its community.

Korry Electronics, Seattle, for reducing its use of toxics, eliminating the use of brominated flame retardants, conserving water and energy, and promoting resource conservation in its sister companies.

Panasonic Shikoku Electronics Corporation of America – Consumer Electronics, Vancouver, for eliminating the use of brominated flame retardants and heavy metals, aggressively recycling over 90 percent of its waste, and conserving energy and water.

To find out more about the award, see the press release at www.seattletilth.org/pressroom.

Tilth Partners Swing at 'Tractor Pull' Fundraiser



Dance caller Tony Mates (top left) had to ask wall-to-wall square dancers (top right) to do-si-do with elbows down to prevent injuries during the October 9 Tilth Tractor Pull. Concert opens WB Reid and Bonnie Zahnow sat in on a set with headliners, The Tallboys (above). Ticket and raffle sales raised over \$2,500 for Seattle Tilth.

Thanks to the Tractor Pull Organizers

Justine Dell'Aringa
Willi Galloway
Renee Rhone

Performers

The Tallboys
Tony Mates
WB Reid and Bonnie Zahnow



Special thanks to our host, The Tractor Tavern

tractor
MUSIC, BEER, BBQ & LIQUOR
5213 Ballard Ave. NW 789-3599



Join the Seattle Tilth Board of Directors!

Contact Karen Luetjen
at 206 632-1999
for information about
board committee work
and positions.

Thanks to these donors of supplies or services to support the event

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Sarah Kulfan, Beans'n'Rice
Seattle Asian Art Museum
Sister Sage Farm



Be a master of your compost! The Master Composter/Soil Builder training takes place each spring, thanks to the sponsorship of Seattle Public Utilities, the Saving Water Partnership, and the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program (LHWMP). Sessions cover soil science, making hot piles for yard waste composting, bedding worm bins, and sharing information through public outreach as volunteers. Check out our website at www.seattletilth.org after December 15 for details on program applications and training schedule.

Visit a Rain Garden This Winter

Continued from page 1

ural habitat. So how does one slow the flow and recharge our natural water bodies with clean, pure water? This is where the rain garden and swale come in.

A rain garden, simply described, is an area planted with a variety of plants that is able to contain an influx of water and allow it to drain slowly, with the plants' roots absorbing a portion of the flow. The key to its success is deep, well-draining soil that is composed of a mix of organic matter and sandy loam. This soil composition is nothing new to an organic gardener – it is alive with macro- and microorganisms and is able to support a diversity of plants that are healthy and prosperous.

In the rain garden, water that is not absorbed by the plants filters down through the soil to the water table, which in turn feeds our creeks, ponds and lakes. By the time it reaches its destination, much of what may be harmful is removed or neutralized by beneficial soil bacteria and fungi, and the flow of water is slowed to a trickle.

Swales perform the same filtering function, but are built to handle a much larger inflow of water. A swale resembles a ditch with carefully designed, gently sloping sides that slow the water flowing into and through them. The depth allows for greater capacity than a rain garden, and the more technically engineered soils in swales give them an ability to slowly reabsorb the stormwater over the course of many hours, up to a day after major runoff appears. A well-built swale is capable of handling the combined stormwater runoff of city streets, sidewalks, driveways and parking lots.

Now that the winter rains are here, it is an exciting time to visit these landscape features in action! Below is the address of the Seattle Public Utilities website that gives highlights of public projects that incorporate them. Two of my favorites are the Street Edge Alternative (SEA) streets north of Greenwood and the High Point Neighborhood Redevelopment in West Seattle.

Until rain gardens and swales become commonplace in your neighborhood, here are a few things you can do to reduce the negative impacts of stormwater:

Garden organically: Not using chemicals and building healthy soil keeps the environment clean and filters the water that flows through your garden soil.

Get rid of impervious surfaces: Consider a grassy, gravel, open grid or porous concrete driveway and pervious garden paths. Remove concrete in parking strips and put in plants.

Create your own: Place a rain barrel at your roof downspout and run a hose from its overflow spigot into a rain garden well away from your house.

Resources

Seattle Public Utilities website provides information on existing and future stormwater projects, including maps and plant lists: www.seattle.gov/util/About_SPU/Drainage_&_Sewer_System/index.asp

Technical information and specifications may be found in this manual, produced by the Puget Sound Action Team and WSU Pierce County Extension: www.psat.wa.gov/Publications/LID_tech_manual05/lid_index.htm

For gardening questions, including those regarding rain gardens: The Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline, 206 633-0224, info@lawnandgardenhotline.org

info@lawnandgardenhotline.org
206.633.0224

**Natural Lawn
& Garden Hotline**

*Free expert advice tailored to the
home gardener and landscape professional*

Save the Date!

Seattle Tilth Seed Swap & Annual Meeting
Thursday March 8, 6–9 pm

Choosing the Right Home Composting System for You

Saturday, Jan. 27, 2007, 10:30 am–noon

Good Shepherd Center Demonstration Garden

Did your New Year's resolution include trying to live more sustainably? Have you wanted to start composting your food or yard waste at home but don't know where to start? Then this is the class for you! You will learn the basics of food and yard waste composting and what you need to get started. We will show you some of the many compost bins available locally and help you decide which is best for your family. You will leave armed with the knowledge and resources to implement your own home composting system. This class costs \$15 for members, \$18 for non-members. Pre-registration required. To register, go to www.seattletilth.org, download a registration form and mail it in with your payment.



Yard waste compost bins, rain barrels and Green Cones (food waste digesters) are available for purchase at the Seattle Conservation Corps located at Sand Point/Magnuson Park.

Call 206-684-0190 to get directions and hours for pick-up.



Naked Gardener A Peck of Trouble

One of my keenest gardening pleasures actually takes place in the kitchen: I love to cook and serve food from the garden. I feel that pleasure most keenly in the winter months when home-grown food is quite scarce. So I'm happy to say that for Thanksgiving we'll have pie from our own sugar pumpkins, Delicata squash, maybe even some tomatoes. And for those of our guests

who like to live dangerously I've got something spicy in a jar.

I know people who enjoy eating food so spicy that it makes many of their excretory functions go into overdrive right there at the table. First they break into a sweat and start mopping their brows with a handkerchief. Then the insult to their mucus membranes makes them sniff, and sniff again until sniffing doesn't cut it any more and they have to blow their nose on the same handkerchief. Eventually the mucus flow produces a bout of coughing that fills their eyes with tears – which they have to wipe away with their sleeves because that handkerchief (by now too disgusting to be revealed in decent company) is saturated with mucus and sweat and will not absorb any tears anyway.

This is all a lot of fun to watch. But it's not something I feel like experiencing myself. So I'm hard put to explain the jalapeño pepper plants that flourished in my garden this hot and sunny summer. As more experienced diners will know, jalapeños occupy the *muy picante* end of the pepper spectrum, which we found out the first time we tried using them in a dish. Believe me, a little jalapeño goes a long way. We nibbled away at them, using a bit here and a bit there. It took us weeks to consume each pepper.

As a result we were unable to make use of the full harvest of peppers before the cool, damp weather of autumn threatened to damage them. I hate to waste food, and especially food I've grown myself (this prejudice has got me into trouble before, and I fear it may have done so again). Not willing to see the peppers rot I had to pick them. Having picked them I had to decide how to preserve them, and although I know that peppers can be successfully dried, I chose to pickle them.

In case you wondering about it, I feel certain they amounted to less than a **peck**, although I should admit that I'm not really sure how much a peck is.

But the question remains: whatever possessed me to grow them in the first place? If I could remember why, I'd supply the answer here and now and end this terrible suspense. Unfortunately the spring of '06 is a hazy memory to me, and I am reduced to speculation. I speculate that there is a kind of vernal madness that overcomes susceptible gardeners like me. We are affected in odd ways by the bright prospect of a new gardening season. The colorful catalogs and the plant sales dazzle us, our ambition overleaps our better judgment, and some kind of foolishness inevitably results. Unwise, unwise.

So I picked a couple jars of pickled peppers, OK? The next question that faces me is – what will I do with them? My optimistic side, that part of me that my nearest and dearest know as "The Woolly Thinker," hopes that pickling will lessen the fiery intensity of these capsicums, allowing me to eat them without ill effects. Mellowed out, they could make a nice addition to an omelet, or many other dishes. But in my gut I know differently. These are old, hardened survivors of the vegetable kingdom: pickling probably just makes them even hotter.

I guess I'll find out. I might wait until spring to try them – it's an optimistic time of year. But if you see me with tears in my eyes in spite of that, I'd appreciate it if I could borrow your handkerchief.

Join Seattle Tilth!

New Member Renewing Member New contact information?

Name(s) _____

Address _____

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E-mail _____

Membership levels \$30 Regular \$50 Supporter
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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



Give Tilth Memberships, or Adopt a Program

Nothing says *Happy Holidays* like a membership in Seattle Tilth! It's the gift that keeps on giving, as we subscribe your giftee to a year of the Seattle Tilth newsletter, provide discounts on classes and programs, and bring that special someone into our welcoming membership, filled with engaging activities and worthwhile community programs. If you're already a member, step up your involvement to a sustaining level by adopting one of our many wonderful programs. For gift memberships or Adopt-A-Program donations, use the form on this page.

Tilth Wish List

- Plastic bucket wheelbarrow
 - Gift certificates at Lowe's or Home Depot
 - New office copier (that will print front and back and collate)
 - Color inkjet printers, preferably Canon
 - Plastic cart/ shelving unit for greenhouse
 - Hori-hori gardening knives (available at AM Leonard)
 - Hand pruners
 - Battery operated clock for greenhouse
- Books (or gift certificate to buy books):
- *Carrots Love Tomatoes*, Louise Riotte
 - *Permaculture in a Nutshell*, Patrick Whitefield
 - *How to Make a Forest Garden*, Patrick Whitefield
 - *The Backyard Berry Book*, Stella Otto
 - *Planting Greenroofs and Living Walls*, Nigel Dunnett and Noel Kingsbury
 - *The Edible Container Garden: Growing Fresh Food in Small Spaces*, Michael Guerra

Corrections This organization was omitted from the printed program for the September 9 Harvest Fair:

OUT-GMO's stands for Olympians United for Truth about Genetically Modified Organisms, started this year in Olympia by Kevin Anderson, Director of the GM Free School Lunch Campaign, and Vanessa Ruddy, who spearheaded the organic school lunch movement. Its mission is to educate the public about GMO's and what steps to take. For further information contact kevin.anderson@responsibletechnology.org.

Classifieds

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

Rain Barrels. 60 gallon, food clean, fully assembled with brass fittings and removable mesh screen. Available in black, terra cotta and blue. Excellent value, only \$57.50 each (delivery and installation available). Call or e-mail me, Dan Borba, at 253-272-8173, naturalrainwater@yahoo.com. Harvesting the rain since 1999.

Calvin Creasey, Natural Gardening. Rose care and pruning. The best plants, grandly grown. 206 789-6456.

Green Light Gardening Consultation, design, and pruning lessons. Specializing in helping you create a wildlife-friendly and child-friendly garden with year-round beauty. Emily Bishton, 206 523-1774 or www.greenlightgardening.com

Worm composting on the Eastside? Red wigglers for sale. Call Judy, 425-868-2694, or email judy1007@comcast.net.

Professional worm bin consultant. Specializing in worm bin set up and operation. \$40 for 1 hour consultation and informational material. Tilth member and student discounts. Call Barb at Wiggle Worm Farm, 206 297-7303.

See your garden with new eyes – Experienced and thoughtful pruning and personal instruction on how to manage your landscape. Katy 206 782-7113 or www.gardenvision.net



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expiration date.
Thanks for renewing!

Find Fun, Practical Holiday Gifts at Tilth

The holiday season has arrived, and for many of us, that means trying to find the perfect gift for your loved ones. This year, Tilth encourages you to avoid the malls and big box stores. Forget buying another matching scarf-and-gloves set online. Think sustainability! What's more sustainable than supporting your favorite local non-profit organization? To help, we have put together some unique gift ideas that will provide exercise for the body and mind, help reduce waste and encourage healthy communities and families.

Kid's Garden Kit

If you have a young gardener in the house or are looking for ways to introduce your kids to nature and the source of their food, this is the gift you need! Our Children's Garden educators have engaged thousands of children through hands-on learning and inspired many young environmentalists over the years, and they have packed this kit with some favorite, time-tested, kid-approved activities and supplies. It's hours of gardening fun!

This exciting kit includes our favorite vegetable and edible flowers seeds for children's gardens; magnifying boxes for exploring up-close the fascinating world of bugs, soil, compost or plants; the *Maritime Northwest Garden Guide*, an indispensable month-by-month gardening calendar to help you plan and plant your children's garden; and an activity booklet with fun, educational gardening activities for you and your child. (\$39)

The Tilth Gardener's Favorites Package

This gift contains all of the Tilth gardeners' favorite things! Our gardeners have tried tons of tools, garden aids, books and seeds – but we always come back to these few things. This package is perfect for any new gardener. Whether they're new to the Northwest or have just gotten into gardening, they'll be sure to jump for joy when they open this cool gift!

The Tilth Gardener's Favorites Package includes a hori-hori, the most versatile hand tool on the planet; floating row cover, a multi-use blanket used for seed germination, season extension and pest control; a selection of our favorite tried and true heirloom seed varieties; and the *Maritime Northwest Garden Guide*, an indispensable month-by-month gardening calendar. (\$59)

Tilth Classes

This year, give an experience. Send mom to City Chickens 101, dad to Choosing the Right Home Composting Method for You, or treat your favorite fledgling gardener to the Comprehensive Organic Gardener course. Seattle Tilth offers a wide variety of classes throughout the year; check our website for the most current listing of classes for winter quarter 2007, or call us for spring and summer offerings. (Class costs vary; gift certificates available in any amount.)

Vermicomposting

How about a squiggly red package under your holiday tree? Vermicomposting is composting with worms – red wigglers to be exact. It's a great way to dispose of food scraps and to make valuable, nutrient-rich compost for your garden or houseplants. Tilth stocks stackable worm bins and composting worms as well as plenty of educational brochures to get your special someone started composting at home. (Stackable worm bins, \$95; Box o' worms, \$15; gift certificates available in any amount.)



Holiday Gift Packages will be available after December 1 for pick-up; pre-payments are requested. Gift certificates and worm composting supplies are available in the Tilth office at 4649 Sunnyside Avenue N, Room 120, Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm or by appointment. For more information, go to the Tilth website at www.seattletilth.org or call 206 633-0451 ext. 1.