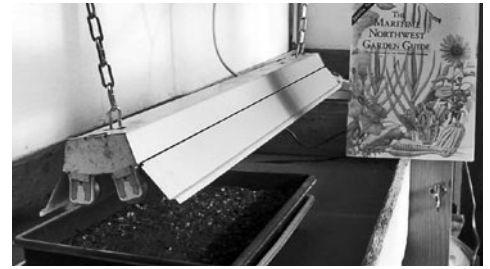


Seattle Tilth

ORGANIC GARDENING • URBAN ECOLOGY • COMPOSTING • RECYCLING VOL 30 NO 1 • FEB/MARCH 2007



Starting Seeds Indoors

Pay Attention to Light, Heat

Kathy Dang, Demonstration Garden Coordinator

Growing and nurturing your own plants from seed is a fun and rewarding way to experience the process of vegetable gardening from start to finish. Reasons to start from seed include:

- Ensure the quality of your transplants.
- Encourage healthy, vigorous seedlings that will perform well in your garden.
- Extend the growing season. Start crops early indoors.
- Choose from hundreds of heirloom and rare varieties that are not available as starts.

In addition to patience and careful observation, proper light and heat are two key environmental factors that will help you be a successful indoor seed-starter.

Light. Since vegetable seedlings need up to 12 hours of light per day, a sunny windowsill will provide enough light only after the spring equinox on March 21. Additional light is needed for many heat crops, like tomatoes and peppers, which should be started in February and early March. You can also give an early start to your favorite cool season crops, like lettuce and broccoli, and transplant them outside in mid-April for an early harvest.

Fluorescent bulbs provide a great source of supplemental light because they closely reproduce the natural color spectrum of sunlight. Since they are cool, you can hang the lights 1–2" above the tops of your plants without burning the leaves. This will help prevent leggy plants—those that grow tall and spindly from lack of light. Clip-on light fixtures or



lights hung from chains above your plants are easy to adjust as your plants grow. For houses with limited space, lights can be placed in closets, under tables and inside unused cabinets or shelves. Since seedlings grow well with equal lengths of light and dark, an inexpensive timer will allow you to control lighting periods.

Heat. In addition to light, vegetable seeds need a temperature of 60–75° F in order to germinate. A heated home will offer enough heat for plants to grow but bottom heat will improve germination rates, especially for heat crops. Bottom heating is a technique for delivering heat directly to the soil by placing seed trays on top of a warm surface, such as a heating mat. After the plants are growing they no longer need bottom heat but still need plenty of strong light.

Seed starting supplies are available at your local nursery or through your favorite seed catalog. Light fixtures and bulbs cost \$20–40 and heating mats will run \$10–25. The Indoor Sun Shoppe in Fremont (www.indoorsun.com) is a good source for indoor gardening supplies. Consult our *Maritime Northwest Garden Guide* for a complete sowing calendar. Happy seed starting!

Become an MC/SB Add Some Letters (and a Slash!) to Your Name

Ever wondered what's going on underground in your garden? Do you want to help our communities become greener? Become a Master Composter/Soil Builder and learn about composting food and yard wastes, building healthy soils, conserving water and creating beautiful, pest-free landscapes.

MC/SBs learn how to pass on your knowledge effectively to the public. They receive free, in-depth training that only requires 40 hours of community outreach in return.

All Seattle city residents are invited to take part. Application deadline is February 21, and the three-week training takes place in March and April.

Contact MC/SB Volunteer Coordinator Angelina Shell at 206-633-0097 or e-mail angelinashell@seattletilth.org for an application. Details are also available on our Web site, www.seattletilth.org.

Three Great Reasons to Attend Our Annual Meeting

Karen Luetjen, Executive Director

I'll give you three great reasons to attend this year's Annual Meeting, scheduled for Thursday, March 8, 6–9 pm in the Good Shepherd Center Chapel:

1. First and foremost, the Annual Meeting begins with a potluck, and Tilth potlucks are the best! Wholesome organic ingredients, lovingly prepared, accompanied by great conversation with other members, volunteers, and supporters. Last year, we could hardly get the program started because everyone was having such a great time. Many people tell us that they have met some of their best friends through Seattle Tilth, so bring a dish and get ready to meet some great people.
2. This should be the first reason but I had to put food first, so just think of this as reason 1.2: This year's meeting will have a special focus on Seattle Tilth volunteers. We'll have some special recognition for current and past volunteers, and we will also introduce current board members and vote on new officers. Then we will ask for your input on a new volunteer initiative being led by board member Beth Lenholt. Beth intends to make the volunteer experience even better at Seattle Tilth and she needs your input.
3. This reason also should be first, but really, that's not a numbering system. OK, reason 1.3: we are kicking off a year of preparation for Seattle Tilth's 30th anniversary, which is coming up in 2008. We'd like to share our ideas for activities and events, and get ideas from you. It is remarkable how even experienced gardeners credit Tilth with helping them become better organic gardeners and adopting more environmental practices. If you have learned something important to you, made a friend or even changed the way you live because of Seattle Tilth, we would like to record your memories in preparation for our anniversary next year. So please join us at the Annual Meeting!

Transitions

After two years in a ground-breaking term as board president, Neal Thayer is leaving the board of directors. Drawing from his strong background in organizational development and facilitation, Neal led the board and staff in active strategic planning that brought heightened attention and commitment to Tilth's business plan and partnerships. Jayne Simmons, owner of SisterSage Herbs, also completed her term in December. Jayne worked on fundraising events and procured donations; her lively ideas will be missed.



New board members, from left, Sara Coulter, Andrea Tousignant and Eric King

Eric King joined the board in October 2006. Eric is Program Manager of the US Partner Group at Microsoft Corp. As manager for the Initiative on Social Enterprise at the Harvard Business School, he developed education programs for non-profit executives, applying relevant lessons from the for-profit sector including financial management and strategic alliances. New board member Andrea Tousignant is a contract business systems analyst who for many years served on the board of P-Patch Trust. Andrea participated in Tilth's CORE program (now called Comprehensive Organic Gardener) in 1999. Also joining the board is Sara Coulter, a volunteer recruiter with Senior Services. Sara grew up on an organic farm in Minnesota and, for four years as a Peace Corps volunteer, advanced aquaculture and permaculture methods in Zambia.

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
	Nancy Evans
Vice President	Willi Evans Galloway
	Eric King
Secretary	Nicole Kistler
	Beth Lenholt
Treasurer	Brandon Pemberton
	Renee Rhone
	Jayne Simmons
President	Craig Skipton
	Andrea Tousignant

Staff Members

Lorraine Brooks	Natural Soil Building Program (nsb)
Liza Burke	Natural Soil Building Program
Andrea Cummins	Natural Soil Building Program
Kathy Dang	Demonstration Garden Coordinator
Karen Luetjen	Executive Director
Charlotte Moss	Bookkeeper
Laura Niemi	Demonstration Garden Coordinator
Sam O'Brien	Children's Garden Assistant Teacher
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

E-mail

Send to 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. 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

Join Tilth in 2007 for Fun, Educational Programs



Children's Garden Programs

Seattle Tilth's Children's Garden, located adjacent to the Good Shepherd Center Demonstration Garden, offers an array of classes in spring, summer and fall for young gardeners of all ages. They range from toddler classes (with a parent) starting at age 1 to junior counselor programs for older children up to age 14. Course listings indicate whether parents are required or allowed to attend, and whether siblings may be brought along. Also, we are repeating the popular "Earth Steward" field trips for school classes. For more information, contact Seattle Tilth at 206-633-0451, ext. 2 or www.seattletilth.org.

Earth Steward Garden Tours

Fun, hands-on garden field trips for school groups in preschool through sixth grade.

Mar 13–June 8, Tuesday–Friday at 10 am or 1 pm.

Groups of children engage all their senses through exploration and hands-on activities in the garden. We taste herbs and flowers, touch the soft and the prickly, forage in the soil to discover compost critters and allow children to find the unexpected delights of gardening. All tours begin with an introductory activity and two or three other garden "stations." Children learn and practice important garden activities such as making compost, planting, tending and harvesting crops, collecting seeds and other seasonal activities. Visit once or make a series of visits to build on gardening and environmental concepts.

Cost: \$4.50 per child / \$65.00 minimum.

Reservations are now being made for Spring.

Spaces fill quickly. Call soon to reserve a date.

Monday Mornings at the Children's Garden

NEW!

Ages 2–5 years – Even our youngest friends enjoy the garden. These one-day sessions introduce children and parents to insects, flowers and the garden world. We will sing songs, find colors and shapes, and taste the flowers and plants that grow in the garden. Each class is one morning, 10–11:30 am. *Classes are intended for both parent and child.* Cost: \$20 / \$15 Tilth members

Wiggle, Squiggle, Giggle

April 16 – Explore all things slithery, squirmy and (of course) slimy.

Bug Tales

April 23 – Discover good insects, in the air and on the ground, yeah!

Dig and Dance

April 30 – Plant seeds, dig out weeds, water plants and have fun helping the garden.

Dirty, Dirty, Dirty Dirt (and some water, too)

May 1 – This class is held on Tuesday morning. Digging, planting seeds, using tools, and pulling weeds.

Seed Soup

May 7 – Seeds big and seeds small, plant them and watch them grow!

Insect-a-Rama

May 14 – Discover good insects, in the air and on the ground. Wiggle your abdomen!

Slimy Creatures

May 21 – Enter a world of slime. Meet snails, worms, slugs, and other slippery critters.

Flower Fandango

June 4 – Taste the different plants and flowers in the garden. Collect a petal rainbow.

Ladybug Picnic

Sept. 10 – Ladybugs of all shapes and sizes come to feast. Learn insect anatomy.

Fabulous Flowers

Sept. 17 – Smell and taste the flowers. Make an outrageous garden bouquet.

Peawee Classes for Toddlers

Ages 1–2 – These one-day sessions introduce toddlers and parents to the possibilities of the peawee patch. We will sing songs, find colors and shapes, taste flower petals and wiggle our toes in the dirt.

Each class is one morning, 10–11:30 am.

Classes are intended for both parent and child.

Cost: \$25 / \$20 Tilth members

Dirty Knees, Wet Feet

(A) *June 13* (B) *Aug. 1*

Dig, water plants, add seeds and do a dance!

Plant and Dance

(A) *June 20* (B) *Aug. 22*

Dig holes, fill them in, and do it all over again!

Fantastic Flowers

(A) *July 6* (B) *Aug. 29*

Smell and taste flowers, make a rainbow bouquet.

Don't Squish That Bug!

(A) *July 18* (B) *Aug. 30*

Discover good insects (and worms too) in the air and on the ground!

Preschool Morning Programs

Ages 3–5 – These theme-based, two-day sessions introduce children and parents to insects, flowers and the garden world. Morning sessions include gardening, an art project, stories, our famous sun tea and yummy snacks!

Each class is two mornings, 10 am–12 pm.

Parents are encouraged and welcome to attend.

Cost: \$45 / \$35 Tilth members; \$18 for additional sibling 1–2 years old

Slimy Creatures

(A) *June 11, 12* (B) *Aug. 20, 21*

Explore the world of slugs, snails, worms and other slippery critters. Build bug houses!

Get Dirty!

(A) June 14, 15 (B) July 19, 20

All gardening, all the time. Digging, planting seeds, using tools and pulling weeds.

Seeds Everywhere!

(A) June 18, 19 (B) July 30, 31

Seeds big and seeds small, seeds that explode and seeds that fly. All will grow into plants.

Ladybug Picnic

(A) June 21, 22 (B) Aug. 27, 28

Ladybugs of all shapes and sizes come to feast. Learn insect anatomy. Invite a ladybug to tea.

Flower Mania

(A) July 2, 3 (B) Aug. 23, 24

Make colorful bouquets and herb collages. Brew tasty flower tea.

Cool Tools

(A) July 16, 17 (B) Aug. 2, 3

Tend the garden and dig in the soil using an enormous variety of garden tools!

Preschool Afternoon Programs

Ages 3–5 – Theme-based, two-day afternoon sessions are the same great garden fun as our morning programs! Afternoon sessions also include gardening, art and snacks.

Each class is two afternoons, 1–3 pm.

Parents are encouraged and welcome to attend.

Cost: \$45 / \$35 Tilth members; \$18 for additional sibling 1–2 years old

Fly Like a Beetle

(A) June 14, 15 (B) July 2, 3

Discover how garden bugs, insects and spiders live and grow.

Dig In!

(A) June 18, 19 (B) July 30, 31

Dig great holes in the garden using every tool in the shed.

Petal Power

(A) June 21, 22 (B) July 19, 20

Make beautiful art and outrageous bouquets. Find a petal rainbow.

Garden Detectives

Ages 5–6 – Special sessions for gardeners who are about to enter kindergarten or have just finished their first year of school and will be entering the first grade. These afternoon sessions feature gardening, art projects, stories, our famous sun tea and great garden snacks!

Each class is two afternoons, 1–3 pm.

Parents are encouraged to leave campers but may attend with a younger sibling if needed.

Cost: \$45 / \$35 Tilth members; \$18 for additional sibling 3–4 years old

Flower Fandango

Aug. 2, 3 – Pick flower bouquets. Make garden badges.

Tools Rule

Aug. 20, 21 – Learn to use tools, clean them and put them away.

Bugs and Slugs

Aug. 23, 24 – An awesome adventure in the creature realm.

Seed Search

Aug. 27, 28 – Explore the seedy underworld of the garden.

Garden Adventure Day Camps

Our week-long day camps are in their 8th great year. Five days of insects, vegetables, soil, worms, playing games, making art, reading stories, singing songs and running through the sprinklers make for BIG GARDEN FUN!

Campstake place Monday–Friday, 10 am–2 pm.

Get Up and Grow!

June 25–29 Ages 6–10

Dig in and REALLY garden! Use tools to dig veggie beds and excavate gigantic roots. Run the compost relay and garden obstacle course. Find out what lives under those leaves. Get dirty!

Cost: \$170 / \$135 Tilth members

Ready, Set, Garden!

July 9–13 Ages 5–6

This special session explores how all the things in the garden work together. Discover what lives on the plants and under the mulch. Use tools to tend the garden.

Cost: \$170 / \$135 Tilth members

Creatures Galore!

July 23–27 Ages 6–10

Dive into the creature world. Discover what is living in the soil, on plants, and under that rock. Make a habitat for beneficial insects, go on a garden safari and keep a critter journal. Follow that butterfly.

Cost: \$170 / \$135 Tilth members

Garden Power

Aug. 6–10 Ages 5–6

Another special session for gardeners ages 5–6 explores insects and creatures living in the garden. Learn how to make soil, run the garden obstacle course and build bug houses.

Cost: \$170 / \$135 Tilth members

Wild Crafts

Aug. 13–17 Ages 6–10

This class focuses on using plants growing in the Tilth gardens and around Meridian Park. Learn which plants are good to eat and which make great building materials! Make musical instruments, build amazing garden structures and create cool garden crafts.

Cost: \$170 / \$135 Tilth members

Junior Garden Counselor Program

Ages 10–14 – This is an exciting opportunity for older gardeners to participate in our summer camps and help younger children learn about organic gardening. Week-long placements offer all the fun of summer camp with the opportunity to lead garden activities. Leadership training and orientation provided.

Half Day, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

Cost: \$110 / \$75 Tilth members

June 11–15 June 18–22

July 16–20 July 30–Aug. 3

Aug. 20–24 Aug. 27–30*

*short week, tuition reduced – \$95/\$60 Tilth members

Full Day, 9:30 am–2:30 pm

Cost: \$145 / \$115 Tilth members

June 25–29 July 9–13

July 23–27 Aug. 6–10

Aug. 13–17

For a full description of the program and a Junior Garden Counselor application, contact Lisa Taylor at lisataylor@seattletilth.org or 206-633-0451, ext. 2.

Adult Garden Programs

Individual courses, multi-day intensives and multi-week training programs are held for new and experienced gardeners throughout the year. Short sessions are also held during our major public events—the Edible Plant Sale in May and Harvest Fair in September. For all courses, advance registration and payment are required.

Comprehensive Organic Gardener Program

March 8–29, *Thursdays 7–9 pm and Saturdays 10 am–3 pm; Bradner Gardens Park*

Also offered April 10–May 1 (Tuesdays and Saturdays) and Sept. 26–Oct. 17 (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

Indoor Seed Starting – Intensive Two-day Workshop

Saturday, March 10 and Sunday, March 11, 10 am–2 pm; Good Shepherd Center Demonstration Garden

This two-day intensive is perfect for the gardener who wants to get a jump-start on the season! Why wait around for the nurseries to start carrying vegetable starts when you can save money and grow your own? Best of all you can grow varieties you can't find in stores.

Students will learn what it takes to start seeds indoors, from buying the supplies to transplanting out into the garden. Topics will include seed selection, cool crops and heat crops, pricking out and potting up as well as how to propagate herbs by cuttings. Each student will receive seed-starting supplies and will take home starts and seeds planted in class. If you have seeds you'd like to start, bring them along!

Cost: \$85 / \$75 for Tilth members, plus a \$10 materials fee payable at first class.

Straw Bale Gardening

Saturday, March 24, 11 am–12:30 pm

Good Shepherd Center Demonstration Garden
Bale gardening was developed in Europe as an alternative to the use of chemicals to destroy plant pathogens in greenhouses and in the field. Rather than planting in diseased soil, gardeners plant into a soil mix on top of bales of straw. In an urban garden, this technique works well over hard pan or other poor soil, contaminated soil or excessively weedy areas. Join us for this hands-on class and learn how to

construct a bale garden and help install one in the Tilth Demonstration Garden.

Cost: \$20 / 15 for Tilth members

Get Ready to Garden!

Sunday, March 25, 11 am–12:30 pm

Bradner Gardens Park

Come out and learn how to get your garden ready for spring and summer crops. The Tilth gardeners will show you how to prepare your beds for planting, including determining if the soil is dry enough to cultivate. You will assist in planting seeds and building season-extension tools such as cloches and cold frames. Gardeners will leave equipped with the knowledge to get their gardens into shape and kick off a productive new garden season.

Cost: \$20 / 15 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

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.

How to Register

Classes require advance registration.

Print, fill out, and mail the registration form available on our Web site at www.seattletilth.org

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 will 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 provide resources for making further connections related to permaculture in the Seattle community.

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

Fall Salad Gardening

Saturday, Aug. 25, 11 am–12:30 pm

Good Shepherd Center Demonstration Garden

Fall salad gardens are the easiest thing around and what a payoff! All you need is a little advanced planning, four square feet, and you'll be grazing for months. When you see how easy it is to plant and grow a salad garden, you'll wonder why they charge \$7.99 a pound for the stuff in the grocery stores!

Cost: \$20 / 15 for Tilth members



Naked Gardener The Way the Wind Blows

If the big windstorms of the winter of '06-'07 didn't actually blow your garden clean away, they will surely have covered it with leaves, needles, cones, twigs, branches and other tree-trash ripped from the canopy of the urban forest. Mine began to resemble the aftermath of a clear-cutting operation, but without the stumps. It seemed that no sooner had we cleaned up

from one storm than another one came along, felling big trees and creating mess and widespread chaos. Firewood everywhere. It reached the point that Hardwick's Swap Shop (a hardware store for the strong of heart) had completely sold out of both the 4-pound and 6-pound steel splitting wedges by early January. And the splitting wedge sales index does not lie.

On a windy Sunday in early January I took a break from endless yard cleanup and dug through the worm-bin, trying to figure out what was making tunnels in there. The next-door-dog, Joy, elected to help me out. She had her ears forward and her nose deep into the business, snuffing the muck and food waste and dead leaves bedded deep in the open bin. Alert and intent, she was about as on-point as a White Shepherd/Malamute cross is allowed to be. As I dug, she kept her nose within an inch or so of the sharp end of my fork, which intensified my own attention on the work at hand. That canine nose, of course, told her something that I did not know.

Suddenly a fat brown rat leapt from its newly-exposed den deep in the bedding and Joy lunged forward and snapped it up with stunning speed. The terrified rat squeaked.

Joy is the progeny of countless generations of successful hunters, which shows in her reflexes, but she is out of practice. Tossing the rat in her mouth to adjust her bite she lost her grip for a fraction of a second and the poor rodent took off like a rat out of—well, you know.

The dog and I wanted another chance. We dug through the rest of the worm-bin in hopes of finding more quarry, but came up empty. Nothing but worms, isopods, worms, springtails, worms, more worms, and slugs. I took care of those. I am the progeny of several generations of slug-killers.

Joy kept sniffing optimistically around the bin, but nothing doing. Eventually the boy-next-door came and collected his next-door-dog and she ambled off with him in a mood, I expect, of unfulfilled excitement.

"Unfulfilled excitement," by a coincidence I find almost astonishing, is exactly the feeling that overcomes many a suburban gardener at this time of year. The days grow just a tad longer and the breezes blow soft and mild. Green shoots appear everywhere and the brightly-colored gardening catalogs start to pile up on the kitchen table. We begin to dream of the growing season about to unfold, and all the wonderful flowers, herbs, vegetables and fruits we could grow, if we just set our minds to it.

For folks like us, the glimpses of spring sunshine and the lengthening days are a call to arms, or at least to gardening tools. In celebration of this groundswell of vernal enthusiasm I am pleased to be holding an Imbolc event at our place around February 1st.

Imbolc is the ancient Celtic festival which—well, I expect you can all Google it just as well as I can, so I'll stop right there. It's become a seasonal event for some, at which we invite a few good friends to come by and sit around an open fire cleaning our garden tools. I'll provide linseed oil, sandpaper, wire brushes and beer, and later there'll be a potluck feast. I thank those who introduced me to the festival, for it's a good one.

We will ignore for a while our concerns about global warming, environmental degradation, inhumane government and so on, and take some time to celebrate the season, our friendships, our community. May the wind blow our troubles away.

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.

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 e-mail 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

Seattle Tilth Annual Meeting

Thursday, March 8, 6–9 pm

Good Shepherd Center Chapel

- Bring a potluck dish to share
- Meet new and old friends
- Elect Board officers
- Help plan our 30th Anniversary
- Share your Tilth memories

Have you seen The Chapel?

Interested in serving on the Tilth Board of Directors?

Call Karen at 206-632-1999
for details.

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.

\$ _____ per Month Year Check Charge Invoice

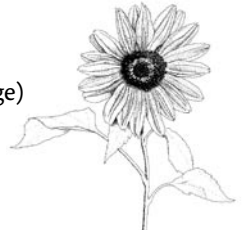
Card # _____ Exp _____

Name on card _____

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.

1. When should I start seeds, and can you give me any tips?

Starting seeds is a great way to try out new varieties of plants, get a head start on the gardening season and save money. Deciding when to plant your seeds depends greatly on the type of plants you are growing, the amount of space you have for pots and the size you want the transplants to be when they go out into the garden. Most seed packets provide detailed instructions including planting dates, suggested depth and spacing for the seeds, and length of time to expect for germination. In general seeds need to be planted on or very near the soil surface and the soil should be kept moist at all times until the seeds sprout. A plastic germination cover placed over the seed tray is a handy way to maintain an even moisture level. For more detailed information regarding specific plant varieties, contact the Hotline, or consider signing up for the Tilth Seed Starting workshop on March 10–11. [Editor's note: see also the seed starting article on page 1 of this issue.]

2. Certain areas of my lawn are completely saturated all winter – is that a problem?

Even with our record-breaking precipitation this winter, patches of the lawn that remain saturated with water are often a sign of poor drainage. To improve the drainage of these compacted areas, aerate your lawn in the fall (October) and again in the spring (March). After aeration, ap-

ply a light top-dressing (¼-inch) of compost. This will help create healthy soil that encourages and supports plenty of beneficial organisms such as earthworms that lighten the soil. Also remember that walking on or working with saturated soil will only worsen the compaction. Avoid those areas during the wet season. Another option you may want to consider is transforming the very wet areas of your lawn into garden beds by planting perennials, shrubs and trees that do not mind wet feet in the winter. Some examples are river birch (*Betula nigra*), Kelsey dogwood (*Cornus sericea* 'Kelseyi') and variegated sedge (*Carex* 'Ice Dance'). For more plant ideas, contact the Hotline and request the free brochures "Going Native," produced by the King County DNRP, and "The Plant List," provided by the Saving Water Partnership.

3. My cats are using my veggie beds like a litter box—what can I do?

This problem can spur some real human creativity! We have had some success criss-crossing 2-foot lengths of bamboo (about 1-inch diameter) on the soil surface. Cats do not like to walk in these areas because the bamboo isn't stable. Weaving

a web of garden twine 4 to 6 inches above the surface of the soil can also be very effective. Either one of these options may even be considered decorative! Another way to discourage visits is by mulching with hazelnut shells or a coarse, crushed gravel. Both are uncomfortable to feline paws but the hazelnut shells, found locally at West Seattle Nursery, can be pricey. Simply keeping garden plots not currently used covered with burlap or a cover crop may be the easiest practice. It also protects the soil from erosion and may provide green manure in the spring or fall as well.



Seattle Tilth

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Volunteers Needed for the Edible Plant Sale

The Seattle Tilth Annual Edible Plant Sale is only a few months away and we are looking for volunteers. The plant sale, to be held May 5-6, is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and we'd love it if you helped make it a success. We need volunteers for all sorts of jobs related to this great event.

- *April 30-May 4* – The week before the sale, volunteer tasks include sign-making, tagging and labeling plants and setting up tents and tables for the sale.
- *May 5-6* – During the sale weekend, we need help staffing the sale with greeters, plant sellers, ticket writers, cashiers, and more!

As a volunteer, you get a chance to help Seattle Tilth to spread the word about the importance of organic gardening. Plus, only volunteers get an invitation to attend the coveted pre-sale, where you can avoid the crowds and shop the best selection of plants!

It is a great help if you sign up early. Last year we had to turn volunteers away because shifts were full, so don't delay.

Sign Up Now! To volunteer, check the volunteer section of our Web site, www.seattletilth.org.

seattletilth.org. There you can review available shifts and e-mail your preference to us. Alternately, you can leave voice mail on our Volunteer Line at 206-633-5045, ext. 1 and a volunteer or staff member will get back to you. In your message, please let us know if you are interested in a particular job and if there are certain hours and dates you are available. Thanks again for helping Tilth put on this great event – we couldn't do it without you!

Important dates for 2007

- February 6** – Comedy Benefit
- March 8** – Annual Meeting
- May 5-6** – Edible Plant Sale
- September 8** – Harvest Fair
- TBA** – Fall Auction

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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

*The date above
your name is
your membership
expiration date.
Thanks for renewing!*