

Seattle Tilth

ORGANIC GARDENING • URBAN ECOLOGY • COMPOSTING • RECYCLING

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In spring of 1978, volunteers broke heavy sod to make Seattle Tilth's first garden beds, in front of the cement basketball and tennis courts yet to be broken up and removed. The park's summer house is seen at right.



Tilth @ 30: Germinating an Organization and a Garden

Carl Woestwin



..... And all the while

Great clouds are moving me across the sky

CHIPPEWA TRIBE

Little did I know in the spring of 1977 that fate was moving me to the gardens at Tilth. I was in my final semester of the Horticultural Science program at Washington State University, studying fruit and vegetable production. The 500-page soils textbook devoted two pages to organic matter in soil; organic farming was not a serious subject at WSU. I wanted to know more! So, I asked for and was granted an independent study of urban, organic agriculture, and set off down the West Coast with my Pentax camera and

Ektachrome film in search of examples. I found them in abundance.

Steve Solomon was introducing adapted Northwest varieties at Territorial Seed Co. in Cottage Grove, Ore. John Jeavons was experimenting with ultra-intensive food production in Willits, Calif. Biodynamic-style gardening was a showpiece of the campus at the University of California-Santa Cruz. The Integral Urban House in Berkeley demonstrated the details of compost and composting toilets, urban chicken and rabbit production, raised-bed gardening, beekeeping— even worms for silk production! Community gardens in San Francisco abutted freeways and high rise buildings.

Anna Lappé to Keynote Seattle Tilth's 30th Anniversary Event

On March 13, seeds will be planted for Tilth's next generation. Celebrating our 30th Anniversary, Seattle Tilth hosts Anna Lappé, national bestselling author of "Grub: Ideas for an Urban Organic Kitchen." With her mother, Frances Moore Lappé, she co-founded the Small Planet Institute and co-authored "Hope's Edge: The Next Diet for a Small Planet."

Anna Lappé's combination of youth and enduring relationship to the work started by her mother (author of "Hope's Edge" and "Diet for a Small Planet") perfectly evokes the sense of Seattle Tilth's work being stewarded by a new generation, after 30 years of being nurtured by those who broke up concrete to plant gardens.

Lappé is respected for her work on sustainability, food politics, globalization,

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Transitions

After 15 years of amazing leadership, Colleen Quinn has ended her work at Seattle Tilth. Colleen joined the staff in 1993 as a hotline educator, and served as interim program manager for both Green Gardening and the Backyard Composting Programs in 1998. She became program manager for the Natural Soil Building Program in 2001. Colleen's extensive knowledge of Seattle Public Utilities goals resulted in the award of two five-year contracts for educational services supporting the Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline and the Master Composter/Soil Builder Program and other projects. She plans to take time for travel and a much-deserved respite from deadlines and budgets.

In order to move closer to family in Portland, Kathy Dang has left our staff after six years as garden coordinator. Kathy created new Permaculture offerings, developed Spanish language classes and led the project to add a green roof to the Tilth greenhouse.

Andrea Cummins has departed after three years on the Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline to take a position as biologist for the Army Corps of Engineers. Andrea prepared for this position by completing the UW Wetlands Science and Management Program over the last year while working part-time for Seattle Tilth.

Save These Dates!

Our 30th year is filled with events and celebrations, old and new. Join us for these upcoming events, all free and open to the public.

25th Annual Edible Plant Sale

Saturday, May 3, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sunday, May 4, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Meridian Park at N. 50th St.

Ribbon Cutting for Teaching Garden Enhancements

Thursday, June 12, time TBA
Seattle Tilth Gardens, Good Shepherd Center

Reception and brief program featuring the work of the UW Neighborhood Design Build Studio to create community-inspired features for the Seattle Tilth Teaching Gardens. This process has been supported by the Seattle Neighborhood Matching Fund.



Olga Shargorodska, Robert Rosencrantz (above) and Cathy Tuttle (not pictured) have joined the Seattle Tilth Board of Directors. Cathy is organizing several sustainability projects, including Sustainable Wallingford and Spokespeople, a bicycle advocacy group. She brings to the board an extensive background as a Pro-Parks planner and researcher for Sustainable Seattle. Olga is Knowledge Services Team Leader for PATH and has volunteered with Tilth for several years. She plans to help us with intellectual property projects. Robert is owner of Rose Properties and serves on the Seattle Great Cities Initiative. He will help ensure that Seattle Tilth's proactive mission stays in the forefront of sustainability plans in the community.

Children's Garden 20th Anniversary Reunion & Picnic

Saturday, Aug. 9, 4-8 p.m.
Meridian Park at N. 50th St.

Seattle Tilth Harvest Fair & Tomato Tasting: Your Locally Grown Food Festival

Saturday, Sept. 6, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Meridian Park at N 50th Street

Volunteer Now for 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.

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

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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

E-mail

Send to firstname.lastname@seattletilth.org

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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. 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



Community members turned out to review drawings of proposed improvements to Seattle Tilth's teaching gardens in Wallingford. The process is being led by former board member Nicole Kistler, who is a landscape architect.

Garden Mapping Project Measures Seattle Tilth's Greening Impact

Craig Skipton, Board President

Attendees at our recent events may have noticed Seattle Tilth members putting dots on a big Seattle area map. We've done this at the last annual meeting, Edible Plant Sale and Harvest Fair. It was big fun and piqued people's curiosities. Well, it is time for us to come clean.

We are in process of creating a system to track the geographic and physical impact of Seattle Tilth. Last year we passed Seattle Tilth's first ever strategic plan, and part of that plan seeks to measure the impact of our activities as an organization. We didn't know then how this measurement need would manifest itself, but we did know that our current membership is geographically all over the place (several current members across the Rockies) and doing great things (copiously gardening organically)!

Some basic attributes we're tracking are coverage, location and area (square footage). On the more fun side, we will be able to assess our accomplishment and progress toward becoming the organic gardening capitol of the world! We will also be able to answer questions like:

How many acres of the Seattle metro area are organic because of Seattle Tilth's members?

How many pounds of organic produce did Seattle Tilth members grow last year?

Who gardens organically in my neighborhood?

Where is there an organic gardener in my neighborhood that I can go and talk to for advice?

Where are the Tilth founders' gardens?

We are ambitiously seeking to add all of our current members to the database by 2009. There is a lot to do still, some of it technical, some of it downright fun. If you have any interest in geographic information systems (GIS), database management or interviewing, we'd love to get some of your time. And with luck on our side, we'll be able to report to you early next year something like, "Thanks to Seattle Tilth, this year there are two gazillion pounds of organic zucchinis and five bazillion pounds less pesticides in our environment."

Here's to you, fabulous Seattle Tilth Members!

Tilth in the News

Seattle Tilth's November garden clinic and Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline were featured on the "Garden of Weedin" blog at *Ecometro.com*. Oregon Tilth's November '07 issue of *In Good Tilth* featured Kathy Dang's article on Straw Bale Gardening. The Tacoma News Tribune quoted Tilth in two "Soundlife" features in September. On Oct. 11, Seattle P-I's reporter Lisa Stiffler concluded her five-part series about her experiences as a first-time gardener, mentioning that she called Seattle Tilth for advice and intended to sign up for the Comprehensive Organic Gardener course next spring. The October issue of Parent Map listed Seattle Tilth as a resource for educating children on plants and plant safety in their article "Protecting Your Child: Safety at Every Age & Stage."



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Thanks for Another Great Tractor Pull!

Over 100 friends promenaded out for the Second Annual Tilth Tractor Pull on Dec. 10. Thanks to all who donated their talents and services for this fundraiser, including the Tractor Tavern, The Tallboys, Tony Mates and Tilth Restaurant, as well as volunteers Charmaine Slavin, Justine Dell'Aringa, Renee Dodds, Willi Evans and Andrea Tousignant.

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Anna Lappé to Keynote Seattle Tilth's 30th Anniversary Event

Continued from page 1

and social change. Named one of *TIME's* "Eco-Who's Who," Anna has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Gourmet* and *O-The Oprah Magazine*, among many other publications. In 2007, she was honored, along with *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof, by The Missing Peace Project and was featured with Karenna Schiff Gore and Amanda Hearst in *Contribute* magazine's "21 Under 40 Making a Difference."

Meet Lappé at a ticketed reception following her presentation, where she will sign her books, which will be available for purchase. Catered by Herban Feast, the reception will be a fundraiser for Seattle Tilth's teaching gardens.

Before and after the program, numerous environmental organizations which have been influenced by or partnered with Seattle Tilth will present displays in the lobby.



When: Thursday, March 13, 7 p.m.

Where: Town Hall, Seattle
1119 8th Ave.

Tickets: \$15 online at
brownpapertickets.com or the
Tilth office



In spring of 1978, Seattle Tilth held its first official event, an Urban Agriculture Day, attended by nearly 200 people who learned from workshops, such as this one on pruning grapes.



Carl Woestwin and his son Sam

Tilth @ 30: Germinating an Organization and a Garden

Continued from page 1

I brought these images back to an enthusiastic if disoriented audience at WSU, graduated in June of '77, then jumped on what I thought would be a one-year "internship" at Pragtree Farm in Arlington, Wash.

Pragtree was a hotbed of alternative agriculture. Mark Musick held the farm together, publishing the regional Tilth Journal from the farm roadhouse, and steadily farming while others came and went. Binda Colebrook was also there, completing the writing of *Winter Gardening in the Maritime Northwest*, Tilth's first venture into book publishing. Woody and Becky Derryckx, two seminal figures in the birth of Tilth Association and Tilth Producer's Co-op, were just transitioning from Pragtree to the Skagit Valley.

Ecotope Group, primarily a solar research organization at the time, had built the parabolic Greenhouse at Pragtree, and its solar fish and vegetable production was featured in most of the national solar publications of the time. The Corner Green Grocery Co-operative members farmed vegetables that were marketed at their Pike Place Market high stall. Michael "Skeeter" Pi-

larski would pass through on his way to organizing Barter and Healing Fairs in Eastern Washington, saving seed for his organization Friends of the Trees. Everyone was reading Wendell Berry's *The Unsettling of America* and the *Whole Earth Review's* mesmerizing coverage of the technology and ideas for a sustainable culture.

I learned a lot at Pragtree Farm, and felt I could stay a long time. But in late August Mark received a call from For-



est Roth, founder of Abundant Life Seed Foundation, about three federally-funded work training positions for a building manager and groundskeepers at the Good Shepherd Center in Wallingford. He asked Mark if he knew anyone who might be interested. Though my short stay at

Pragtree was productive and inspiring, I was ready for this next opportunity.

By September I was the Good Shepherd groundskeeper.

At the time there were almost 150 standard size old fruit trees on the grounds, as well as significant berry and grape plantings. An old gardener's cottage stood at the north end of what is now the Meridian Playfield, and Forest and others dreamed of some kind of gardening center at the Good Shepherd.

In October, the Wallingford Community Council's monthly meeting included a slide show on the history of Wallingford. Usually attended by 15-20 people, this one drew over 70. The co-presenter became ill, and I was asked to fill in with my WSU slide show of urban agriculture projects. The community enthusiastically absorbed the images, and easily envisioned new possibilities for the Good Shepherd property.

The seed was planted for thirty years of growth.

Carl Woestwin, now a Program Manager and Landscape Team Lead for Seattle Public Utilities, was a founder of Seattle Tilth and the first person paid by the new organization to get their hands dirty.

Tilth Recognizes 30th Birthday with Reunion Dinner,

Bill Thorness, Newsletter Editor

The chapel atop the Good Shepherd Center was filled with gardeners on January 24 for an evening celebration of Seattle Tilth's first thirty years and its future prospects. Along one edge of the welcoming space ran a series of tables laden with one of Tilth's famously tasty potluck dinners, while the opposite wall held maps, drawings and notes outlining a new project: redesigning the demonstration gardens that have operated on the building's grounds since 1978.

Billed as a "Reunion Dinner and Annual Meeting," the event felt more like a celebration of possibilities, as founding members and many others who've contributed over the decades talked about the social forces and cultural needs that formed Tilth 30 years ago and are still shaping it today. Conversation and dinner flowed to the beat of music by Jes Raymond and Her Famous Band.



Craig Skipton speaks to a full house.

Four of Tilth's founders—Carl Woestwin, Mark Musick, Elaine Stannard and Steve Ruden—and other members offered some remembrances of Tilth's formative years. Board president Craig Skipton led the 100-plus audience in recognizing them as well as 13 former board members, current board and staff members, and other longtime members.

"It is our members, who give their devotion to the organization, that make Seattle Tilth a success," said Skipton, holding his toddler while leading the group through a brief business meeting and election of new board officers.

"It means so much to me, and to the founders, to see what is happening with Tilth today and that they've inspired so much," added Karen Luetjen, Tilth's executive director.

Delving into his historic slide collection, Woestwin provided a revealing, entertaining view of "the time-spirit that was motivating people to form Seattle Tilth." In 1977, the P-Patch network was underway, and a model community gardening effort was the International District garden, cut into a hillside by I-5 and terraced with donated railroad ties. "It is still functioning today and is a mecca for

a diverse community garden in the city," he said.

After studying at Washington State University and traveling the West Coast to research urban agriculture efforts, Woestwin had a chance to practice what he'd learned as the first groundskeeper of the Good Shepherd Center. (Read his story on the formation of Tilth on page 1 of this issue.) Early projects mirror today's educational efforts: a grant funded a test of cold frame and cloche designs, gar-



Reviewing garden design ideas.

Some Early Milestones

July 1974 – first meeting of regional Tilth organizers

August 1977 – incorporation of regional Tilth association

December 1977 – Seattle Tilth pre-organizational meeting at the main Seattle Public Library

Spring 1978 – garden groundbreaking and first Seattle Tilth event, an Urban Agriculture Day

February 1980 – first classes – keeping chickens and rabbits in the city

May 1981 – Steering Committee formation meeting

Summer 1981 – solar greenhouse constructed

September 1981 – first harvest festival

May 1983 – first plant sale

January 1983 – first annual meeting

Summer 1985 – first city contract for a composting program

Celebration of Possibilities

30 years
Seattle Tilth

den beds demonstrated composting and growing techniques, and classes taught how to keep chickens and rabbits. He told how he and Ruden tended honey bee hives on the roof of a Good Shepherd Center outbuilding and “got over 300 pounds of honey that first year.”

Encouraging members to contribute ideas for the garden redesign, Lu etjen ended the evening by unveiling a new Tilth department: Environmental Programs, which will join garden education and children’s programs to continue serving Tilth’s mission into year 31 and beyond.

Remembrances:



Pickaxing the Blacktop

A transplant from Chicago, Elaine Stannard worked in the civil rights movement, and “always had a little garden like my grandfather taught us,” she recalls. “I knew that organic growers were forming a regional Tilth and I said there are a lot more gardeners than farmers, so let’s start an organization in the city!” She became a founding member of Seattle Tilth. “We’d come out to the garden—a lot of it was blacktop—and get at it with a pickaxe.” She recalls having mostly an herb garden, right across from Monte West, another colorful early Tilth gardener who had studied aborigines. “I’d watch him eating slugs,” she says.

Zoned Commercial: Saving the GSC

Mark Musick remembers driving past the Good Shepherd Center on 50th Street in 1976 and seeing a large sign on the fence: “For Sale: Zone Commercial.” It was slated to become a shopping center. “Here was

this huge, abandoned building, surrounded by fruit trees. I had a real strong feeling this isn’t going to be knocked down, this is going to be saved.” The neighborhood formed a community council to save the property, and it was purchased with city funds that had been earmarked to “put a lid over Highway 99 to expand the zoo,” Musick says.



Crazies Preaching to the Choir

“When I got to Seattle, there wasn’t much gardening going on,” recalls Steve Ruden, a Tilth founding member and former Good Shepherd Center building manager. In the mid-70s, he was a UW graduate student in ecology, and started a grad school garden near the present-day Center for Urban Horticulture. “I got invited to that regional Tilth meeting in the barn (at Pragtree Farm), and here were all these crazies—we were preaching to the choir.” It was the genesis of building a community of gardeners and like-minded organization at the GSC. Today, he says “there is a lot more community-building to do, and the ground is a great place to start.”

Radio Inspiration

Driving along in southern California listening to the radio one day in the mid-1970s, Pamela Burton heard a guy from Washington talking about the amazing gardening possibilities in the Pacific Northwest. “It was someone from Pragtree Farm,” she recalls. “Twenty years later, I moved here and came to Tilth and wanted to learn how to garden here, so I took a class from Carl Elliott.” She soon pitched in to volunteer, quickly became a

board member and then applied for and got the job as Tilth’s first executive director. Today she is still active with Tilth but is also very involved with the state’s solar energy movement.

Checking Veggies of All Kinds

“I’ve been a volunteer for the past 15 years,” explains Wendelien Bolomey. “At the Harvest Fair, Lisa Taylor came up with the idea for a veggie check,” where shoppers could store their farm-fresh vegetable purchases while enjoying the lunch, music and other Fair activities. “I thought that was a great way to volunteer, so a friend and I just did it.” She recalls one elderly woman asking about the service and saying “I should’ve put my husband here!”

Dirty Job: Mixing Fertilizer

Gardening was different in Seattle than Northern California, so Karen Brattesani naturally gravitated to Tilth to learn the ropes. She remembers reading Steve Solomon’s recipes for homemade fertilizer in an early Territorial Seeds catalog. “We thought, what a great idea, we’ll put some of these combinations together, bag them up and put them in the Plant Sale.” They mixed the dry, powdery fertilizers in the “1500 Shed” next to the garden office. “That was the dirtiest job!” she recalls. Now when she buys organic fertilizer “those bags look a little bit pricey, but I know how they put it together, so I’ll gladly pay it!”



Get Growing with Seattle Tilth's Adult Gardening Classes

Spring learning at Tilth focuses on getting the garden ready for growing. There are two Comprehensive Organic Gardener series. Workshops on Biointensive methods, container gardening and choosing a home composting system all are scheduled before our eagerly awaited spring plant sale. Two sessions of our popular chicken-keeping classes are also scheduled.

The Comprehensive Organic Gardener program is an intensive course teaching organic vegetable gardening methods and practice. 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.

At the Edible Plant Sale, this year set for May 3-4, one-hour classes will be held at a reduced class price to help you get your new plants off to a great start. Come and shop for healthy, organic plant starts, then

stay for a class and learn how to make this your best gardening year ever.

Summer classes include a two-day intensive on growing more in a small space, and workshops on vertical gardening, growing heat crops and fall salad garden.

Autumn classes include another session of the Comprehensive Organic Gardener training, along with workshops on composting, building soil life with sheet mulching, and putting the garden to bed.

Most workshops are one to two hours in length, and are held mid-day on weekends. Multiple-day classes include longer sessions, some held on weeknight evenings.

See the basic class listings below, then visit our Web site for complete details and registration forms. Please note:

- Lower member prices are shown first on the listings below.
- Classes are held in north Seattle at the Good Shepherd Center in Wallingford (GSC) or in south Seattle at Bradner Gardens Park in Mt. Baker (BGP).



- Pre-registration is required.

Feb. 16, City Chickens 101, \$25/\$35, GSC

Feb. 21-March 13, Comprehensive Organic Gardener Program, \$205/\$235, BGP

March 8, City Chickens: Starting with Baby Chicks, \$25/\$35, GSC

March 9, Get Ready to Garden!, \$15/\$20, GSC

March 27-April 17, Comprehensive Organic Gardener Program, \$205/\$235, BGP

April 6, Choosing the Right Home Composting System for You, \$15/\$20, GSC

April 13, Biointensive Gardening – Growing the Most in a Small Space, \$15/\$20, BGP

April 16, Container Gardening, \$15/\$20, BGP

April 19, City Chickens 101, \$25/\$35, GSC

May 3 or May 4, Plant Sale Clinic: Edible Container Gardening, \$10/15, GSC

May 3 or May 4, Plant Sale Clinic: 1,2,3 Grow a Garden, \$10/15, GSC

May 15 and May 17, Grow More in a Small Space, \$75/\$85, BGP

May 18, Vertical Gardening, \$15/\$20, BGP

June 21, Growing Heat Crops, \$15/\$20, BGP

June 14, Container Gardening, \$15/\$20, GSC

Aug. 23, Fall Salad Gardening, \$15/\$20, GSC

Sept. 13, Building Soil Life Using Sheet Mulch Techniques, \$10/\$15, GSC

Sept. 20, Choosing the Right Home Composting System for You, \$15/\$20, GSC

Sept. 25-Oct. 16, Comprehensive Organic Gardener Program, \$205/\$235, BGP



Oct. 18, Putting the Garden to Bed, \$15/\$20, BGP



Register Now for Popular Children's Garden Programs

Why should adults have all the fun of gardening? Get your children started early in life to instill a better understanding of the environment and the source of their

food, and set them on a life-long path as gardeners.

Registration is underway for Tilth's fun, hands-on garden explorations and camps for children ages one to 14. The camps are held weekdays, June 9 through August 29. They range from one- to two-hour sessions attended by both children and their parents, to three- to six-hour day camps attended by older children.

Programs include: Peawee classes for infants and toddlers, morning and afternoon preschool programs, Garden Detec-

tives for five and six year olds, Garden Adventure Day Camps for grade schoolers, and a Junior Counselor Program for 10-14 year olds.

The popular classes fill up quickly, so early registration is encouraged. Please note:

- All programs and camps are held at the Seattle Tilth Children's Garden adjacent to the Good Shepherd Center building in Wallingford.
- Lower member prices are shown first on the listings below.
- Pre-registration is required.
- Visit Tilth's Web site or call (206) 633-5045, ext. 2, for a detailed brochure.

April 14-June 2, Monday Mornings at the Children's Garden. Fun, hands-on garden camps for parents and children ages 2 to 5 years. \$20/\$30.

June 9-Aug. 22, Preschool Morning Programs. Theme-based, two-day sessions that introduce children ages 3-5 and their parents to insects, flowers and the garden world. Sessions include gardening, art projects, stories, our famous sun tea and yummy snacks! \$40/\$50 (plus \$20 for additional sibling ages 1-2)

June 19-July 3, Preschool Afternoon Programs. Same curriculum as preschool morning programs. \$40/\$50 (plus \$20 for additional sibling ages 1-2)

June 19-Aug. 25, Junior Garden Counselor Program. This is an exciting opportunity for older gardeners ages 10-14 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 (morning) programs June 19-Aug. 25, \$90/\$120; Full-day programs June 23-Aug. 11, \$130/\$160.

June 23-Aug. 11, Garden Adventure Day Camps. Our weeklong day camps for gardeners ages 6-10 are in their tenth 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. \$155/\$190



Naked Gardener: Turn Left at the Slug

My wife called me at work towards the end of a dark, January day to ask

“Where are the carrots?” What kind of question is that? Well in this case it was a split-pea-soup-ingredient question. The carrots were in the garden as she already knew, but that wasn’t enough for her. Since the dusk was darkening, the daylight dimming, the night about to—in the words of Donovan—“draw on its purple cloak of velvet to the sky,” she faced the prospect of searching for carrots by flashlight. She needed directions.

I did not point out that a little advance thought on her part might have spared us both this trouble. I resisted making the observation that she could have gone out into the grey twilight of high noon and found the carrots without my help. You may wonder at my restraint. To that I can only say that when someone else is preparing your meal you are well-advised not to provoke them in any way, especially towards the hypoglycemic end of the afternoon.

“They’re sort of close to the bean trellis,” I offered. The trellis last year was a novelty. A delicate tracery of arching rods saved from the Filbert trees we cut down last spring, laid out in a horseshoe-shaped bed that was thus enclosed by greenery, blossoms and beans during green-bean season. I often entered this leafy bower, partly to pick beans, but also to enjoy the experience, and would sometimes see a hummingbird there feeding on the scarlet flowers. The whole arched, curvilinear enterprise was provoked by my son’s criticism of the regular, rectangular garden beds I have always had. Well, I showed him.

“On the north side of the garden, then?” she suggested. This always throws me for a few seconds. I have been known to mistake north for south, and vice versa. I have to work it out in my mind by remembering how my garden is oriented towards the sun. Even then, I’m not so certain.

“Well, yes, I guess. But south of the bean trellis and more over towards the raspberries.” And here I was picking landmarks that I thought my wife might know. I could not expect her to remember where the early snap peas had been, nor other plants which I had planted, cultivated and harvested. She knows my vegetable garden about as well as I know her purse. At least that was what I thought, but her next question surprised me.

“OK. Near the big kale, then?”

This would be the Dinosaur Kale I did not plant, unless you accept negligence as a form of husbandry: the parent plants went to seed the year before last, the seed scattered and produced many seedlings the following spring, only some of which I bothered to pull up. Thus there is an inadvertent bounty of kale this winter, whose leaves, chopped and braised with a little garlic make a nice complement to the Delicata squash we harvested in abundance last fall.

“Yes, that’s close. Look for the rounded orange tops of the roots: there aren’t many green fronds left now.”

The carrot tops have rotted away in the cold winter rains, but those roots are hunkered down, fat nuggets of stored energy just waiting for spring to come so they can send up a flower spike and scatter carrot seeds to the four winds. Little do they know that chance will not come. They are destined for the pot and for our stomachs. Carrot energy will diffuse into our bodies, our actions, who knows, even into our very thoughts: we will embrace carrot-mind.

Could carrot-mind have guided my wife through the evening-dark garden to other carrots? Perhaps, but why take a chance when dinner’s at stake? Seeking guidance in the garden is like anything else in life: sometimes it’s just a good idea to ask for help.

Classifieds

Help wanted. Organic gardening and landscaping. Full to part time, Tuesday through Friday, full days required, with a fun crew. We work in the greater Seattle area. Experience preferred. Madelyn, 206-328-3202.

Native Plantings, Creative Plantings:

Restoring natives to yard or garden. Contact The Garden Whisperer for easy-maintenance, low-water-use native plantings that support wildlife. Also: invasive-weed removal. Services: Nate Starling at (206) 860-9636.

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 \$65 plus tax 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

Specializing in child-friendly and bird-friendly gardens with year-round beauty. Consultation, design, and pruning lessons. Emily, 206-523-1774, www.greenlightgardening.com

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.

See your garden with new eyes –

Offering experienced, educated and thoughtful garden coaching and consulting arborist services. Katy at 206-351-1375 or www.gardenvision.net

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.

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Maritime Northwest Garden Guide

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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.

Q: I've noticed that every year there is more flooding in the streets and creeks in my neighborhood. What can I do to reduce the runoff from my own yard so I am not contributing to this problem?

A: Your question is very timely, given the results of our recent winter storms. Here's a simple way to understand why flooding has increased in the Puget Sound region: In an undisturbed forest, the multiple layers of trees, shrubs, groundcovers, and duff that cover and feed the soil give it the ability to absorb 30 days of continual rain before any runoff begins to accumulate on its surface and then travel downhill. However, where soil is covered by roofs, pavement and compacted lawns, it only takes three minutes of rain before runoff begins to move downhill at a high rate of speed, carrying along with it any pollution that is present. Every 1,000 square feet of impervious surface in our region creates 628 gallons of runoff during just a one-inch rainfall! So, because cities and suburbs have replaced much of the forests that used to cover our region, our ever-increasing runoff and flooding problems are a logical result.

The good news is that there are many things you can choose to do in your own yard that will help to greatly reduce its runoff and therefore improve the overall situation in your neighborhood.

1) For patios and walkways: Instead of cement, use flagstone pieces or "eco-block"

permeable concrete pavers, set on a base of crushed rock. Or use colored crushed rock or crushed brick for the entire project. These surfaces allow rainwater to percolate through to the soil underneath, where it is gradually absorbed, rather than sheeting off the paving as runoff.

Encourage all future development in your neighborhood to include permeable surfaces for public spaces, too.

2) For landscape beds: Plant trees, shrubs, and groundcovers to create multiple layers in your landscape beds, and use two to four inches of wood chips and/or leaf litter as mulch. This mimics the forest ecosystem. As the mulch gradually decomposes, it feeds the beneficial organisms that are essential to healthy soil. Here's another interesting reason to plant more trees: besides taking immense amounts of water out of the soil for growth and transpiration, adding just 17 healthy trees to a neighborhood removes 250 pounds of CO2 pollution from the air each year!

You can also create an interesting landscape feature called a "rain garden," designed to handle water from your downspouts or rainfall sheeting off your driveway, patio or other hardscape. Seattle

Public Utilities and WSU/Pierce County have recently published some great information sheets and a handbook on how to build a rain garden, available through the Hotline.

3) For lawns: The soil under your lawn can become as hard as pavement, due to



compaction by rain, foot traffic and direct sun. An annual aeration of your lawn helps bring air pockets back into the soil, which help it absorb water and reduce runoff. Top-dress with a one-fourth to one-half inch layer of compost afterwards to keep the soil and grass healthy. If there are areas where grass does not thrive despite this care, plant sun or shade-loving plants in new landscape beds instead.

Last but not least, since beneficial organisms keep soil healthy and able to store and percolate rainfall, use pesticides only as a last resort in your lawn and garden. For more info on all these methods and more, the Garden Hotline is just a phone call or a keystroke away!

Emily Bishton, Hotline Educator



Seattle Tilth

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Tilth Offers School Groups 'Earth Steward' Field Trips

Classes with students from preschool through sixth grade are invited to visit Seattle Tilth as part of a hands-on Earth Steward Garden Tour.

Groups are led on a tour of Tilth's vibrant Children's Garden, where they will see composting, gardening and art done mostly by children. After an introductory activity, children visit garden "stations" to learn and practice important garden activities such as making compost, planting, tending and harvesting crops, collecting seeds and other seasonal activities.

Exploration is key, engaging the senses by tasting herbs and flowers, touching the soft and the prickly, and foraging in the soil to discover compost critters. The activities offer many ways for children to find the unexpected delights of gardening. Groups scheduling multiple visits can explore the garden at different stages and delve deeper into environmental learning.

The tours are being offered March 11 through June 6, Tuesday through Friday at either 10 a.m. or 1 p.m. To register, visit our Web site or call us at (206) 633-0451, ext. 1. These popular field trips sell out quickly, so prompt signup is encouraged.

E-mail Survey Coming; Please Help by Completing

To better serve our members and others who use Seattle Tilth's services, we're producing our first full-scale membership survey. It will be conducted by e-mail in the coming weeks, and all Tilth members are urged to complete the brief online questionnaire. It will only be available for

a short window of time, so prompt action is requested upon getting the survey notice.

The member survey is part of the Board-led communications committee's plan to better understand our members so we can align activities better with member needs. The survey will be conducted by volunteer Liza Turley, as part of a marketing curriculum for her University of Washington MBA program.

Survey notices will be sent to all members and others currently on Tilth's e-mail listserve. If you're not currently receiving e-mail from Tilth about classes, activities and volunteer opportunities, visit www.seattletilth.org to sign up.

Help Flooded Farmers by Donating Through Tilth Producers

Many farmers in southwest Washington were devastated by flooding in fall of 2007. Our sister organization, Tilth Producers, is gathering information about losses and critical needs of Tilth Producers members and others in the sustainable agriculture community and helping match them with other folks who are in a position to help out those who have lost so much.

To learn more, and to help with monetary donations, visit www.tilthproducers.org

Adult, Children's Classes Listed in This Issue

See page 8 for a listing of two dozen adult gardening, soil-building and chicken-raising classes being offered by Tilth this year. On page 9, our popular children's programs are listed. They include preschool programs and summer day camps.

More information about all of our programs is available at our Web site, www.seattletilth.org.



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