

Weeder's Digest

All the dirt that's fit to print



Newsletter of the Whatcom County Master Gardeners

March 2003

2003 Master Gardener Training begins March 4



We are ready to begin the annual Master Gardener Training. The first class is set to begin on March 4 with 46 new trainees. I believe this will be a very enthusiastic class with many of them ready and willing to volunteer for our projects. If any of the veterans are interested in sitting in on a class or two, please call to see if the class you are interested in is still scheduled on the date on your schedule. We have made some changes to the schedule and may have to make more. So just check with us or on our web site which we will try to keep up to date.

In the near future we will be sending out a brief survey on our newsletter. We have a great newsletter (one of the best in the State) so we do not want to fix something that isn't broke, but we are interested in what we can do to bring our news up to date, and to find out what the readers are interested in. Some of our wonderful writers have been doing it for so long they are running out of ideas for their column. We would appreciate it if you would take the time to give us your ideas on what would improve the newsletter. Thanks

If you need information on what you can do to help with the up-coming plant sale, you can call the office, the president Pat Nelson, or Diane Rapoza. In any case it is time to get started.

Don't forget to finish your winter pruning this month.

Al McHenry

INSIDE:

Tis the Season	2
MG Foundation	3
Plant of the Month	4
Garden Friends & Foes	5
Weed of the Month	6
General Information	7
Dates to Remember	Back Page

Are you ready for some bus trips???

After you recover from the Seattle Flower and Garden Show, we have another trip planned for you on May 15. We plan leave the REI parking lot in Bellingham at 8a.m. and make three stops throughout the day.

Our first stop will be Rhody Ridge Arboretum Park in Bothell. It began as an 11 acre private garden started in 1960 by Fir and Merlin Butler, who have now turned it into a living trust owned by Snohomish County Parks. Springtime heralds in the bloom of hybrid and species rhododendron and crabapples. The vast collection of trees, shrubs, and ground covers is also a sight to behold.

Our second garden stop will be Walsterway Iris Gardens in Snohomish. Ralph and Fran Walster specialize in tall bearded iris, over 500 varieties, as well as Japanese and Siberian iris, too! They promise that the bearded and Siberian iris peak bloom time is mid - late May! You will be able to purchase rhizomes as well as visit the iris inspired gift shop.

Our final stop is Flower World. This is one BIG nursery with display beds greeting you at the entrance. Even in our NW weather, it is a great place to explore, as much of it is under cover. But one can go crazy for hours wandering through the perennials, annuals, trees, shrubs, clematis, roses (I hear the selection is fabulous), grapes, berries, and oh, so many house plants. There's also a great stock of garden supplies such as pots, pavers, statues and bird feeders and much, much more.

We will be arriving back in Bellingham at 5:30 p.m. The cost is \$12.00 for master gardeners and \$18.00 for guests. You may take your lunch if you like, but we will be stopping at The Maltby Cafe, which can accommodate us and has a nice lunch menu. Please call Chris at 360/366-5501 to make reservations.

Also, the foundation is planning some additional bus trips for the summer as well; mark these dates on your calendar. June 26, bus trip to Vancouver, BC and July 16, bus trip to Bainbridge Island, WA.

Newsletter Deadline:

Third Wednesday of every month.



By Faye Agner

I am starting a new feature this month. Please let me know your feelings about the article. I am at rfagner@attbi.com, until they change their name again or 360/371-3177 and would like to hear from you.

WHO AM I?

I am a perennial that is easily grown in this area. I am a native to central Asia and Eastern Europe. I am used as a classic filler in floral arrangements and as an airy look in borders. As a perennial, I have a deep carrot like root and am difficult to transplant. I do not do well in an acidic soil. I have branching stems and form a mound covered of linear-lance-shaped, usually hairless, glaucous leaves, 2-3 inches long. In mid- and late summer I bear numerous loose, many-flowered panicles of shallowly trumpet-shaped white flowers to 3/8 inch across, forming mounds to 18 inches or more across. I mature to about four feet high and across, forming a nice mound. I am also available in pink, a mat-forming habit, and a dwarf variety.

Here it is March and time for spring and to wonder if we are ever going to get enough rain or snow to make it through the summer season with enough water to keep our gardens up.

Bulbs are up and showing buds, crocuses are in bloom, a sure sign that the growing season approaches.

Many of the flowering trees are bursting into bud, forsythia and many others show their blooms. Weeds are also rampant and need to be controlled before they spread seeds. Every weed you pull now cuts down on the work for the rest of the season. Lawns are beginning to need care. If they are spongy underfoot, you need to do a good job of thatching to let the lawn breathe and ready it for the summer. There is sunshine and temperate weather, but still a chance of frost.

Roses are ready for their final pruning, and would appreciate being fed now and every month through out the season with a 5-10-5 ratio fertilizer or a balanced systemic rose fertilizer, which will reduce the need to spray for aphids and other pests. *If you use a systemic fertilizer, do not consume the rose petal in salads even though they are sometimes listed as an edible flower.* If you have added some new varieties to your rose bed, do not feed them until after their first blooming. Now is the time to spray for Mildew and Blackspot. Begin early to thwart these problems before they get a foothold. Look for an approved fungicide, and follow the recommended application as mentioned on the label. The label is not put there to be decorative or to attract your eye on the store display. It has specific instructions that should be carefully followed. I cannot stress strongly enough that **LABELS ARE THE LAW** not only on fungicides, but on all chemicals you use, either in your house or around your gardens and lawns.

Now is the time to plant evergreen trees and shrubs and other bare root all through the month of March. Check on drainage and take steps to control it before planting your new treasures. March is the time to complete the entire late spring pruning, such as fruit trees, raspberries and ornamentals. There is still time for shaping for other shrubs. Do not prune spring blooming plants now, but wait until after the flowering is finished. Don't forget to apply the last of your winter dormant spray

Tuberous begonias should be started now to provide plants that are ready to set out in June. Seeds of tomatoes, peppers should be started now to be set out in May. Seeds of annuals, which take 70-90 days to bloom, should be started indoors or in a greenhouse early in March. The quicker maturing ones, such as marigolds, zinnias, asters and other that need only 60 days for blooming can be seeded indoors by the end of March.

Set out strawberry plants now. Try to obtain only certified plants (that is plants that are certified resistant to some diseases) to save you disappointment of diseases. Many times, the new starts donated by well-meaning friends or from nurseries might be infected by certain diseases. Applying fertilizer on your June-bearing strawberries in the spring results in excessive formation of leaves and runners, and produces less fruit. It is important to fertilize June bearing strawberries in late summer (August) to promote maximum fall growth and flower bud formation.

March is the time to sow some varieties of perennials and cool weather vegetables directly in the prepared planting area. These include beets, carrots, lettuce, peas, radishes and spinach. Seeds of flowering plants including arabis, columbine, coral-bells, delphiniums and veronica may be seeded directly into the ground

Keep on top of the ever-present job of cleaning up your yard by removing leaves that have collected over the winter and any limbs that have been broken during windstorms. Keep on top of slugs by removing their hiding places and putting down bait. Be careful of putting beer in uncovered traps, as the neighboring cats, or other animals find it attractive. Remember that standing water should not be allowed as it attracts mosquitoes.

If the soil is not too wet and not too cold, then you can start spreading that compost in your perennial bed, and vegetable areas. Working the soil when it is too wet results in heavy clumps and this is very difficult to rectify into a suitable seedbed. Don't be in a hurry.

Enjoy your gardening!

The Latin name of the perennial is *Gyposphila paniculata*. Common name will be given next month.



President's Message



Pat Nelson,
MGF President

Greetings fellow MG's

I am looking out at pouring down rain —yes! Return to normalcy! I know it has been nice getting a head-start on spring,-but-we could pay for it later! Now, we wonder, what will March bring? We do know some things for sure. **March** — I hope that the grafting clinic on the 1st was enjoyed by all and that you learned a lot about this valuable art! And, took a wonderful creation home! Still interested in trees — fruit trees? March 8 is an open house at the Tree Fruit Research Station in Mt. Vernon. Also, there are till a few spots for the bonsai clinic on March 18. The new class starts on March 4. Remember, veterans, you can attend classes to brush up on information that is of special interest to you (it might be crowded). Remember, all these events count as “hours”. There are several upcoming events that will be mentioned in Chris Hurst's article.

Back to February — at our last meeting, Dianne Rapoza updated us on changes and additions to the Plant Sale. It isn't that far away!! We need you!! Perennials are showing up, so start dividing and potting! Pots and potting soil are available at the Hovander greenhouse. So, dig up your plants, and take them out to Hovander, and pot up those divisions.

Karri, at the office, has been working very hard at putting together a CD-ROM full of information. Remember that huge stack of handouts that we got for the class? Well, that and much more, will be included. A big thanks to Karri!!

A British Columbia update seminar (equivalent to our advanced training) will be held on April 6 in Burnaby, BC. The cost will be \$35.00 (CDN) for an all-day affair. Mark your calendar!

Last, but far from least The Flower and Garden Show!! As usual, it was great. It was designed for better flow this year. Isn't it amazing how uncomfortable it can be in a big area with thousands of people-unless -you all have something wonderful in common-gardening. I didn't buy anything for the first 7 hours-but then I found the “cool plant” area!! And, were they cool!! I bought a gorgeous Echivera, a fabulous *Rumex Sanguineus*, and an awesome Kalanchoe!! That should make you tremble with excitement!!

Now, back to March, the board will meet on Thursday, March 6, at 10 a.m. Please come join us, we need some fresh input. On Thursday, March 13, at 7 p.m., the Foundation will meet. Come and look and listen to a 'show and tell' program on roses by Donna Oehler! See you there-*Pat*

Perennial Potting Parties

Wednesdays, March 26, and April 2, from 9 a.m. - Noon. Karen Gilliam is once again donating her extra perennials to our plant sale. But she needs help in dividing, potting, and labeling. Please wear gloves and come just to help or as a means of getting your two flats of plants to donate to the sale if you have none of your own. Call 360/384-4562 if you need directions.

Crane Fly Survey Days

In mid-March, we will again be conducting our free crane fly evaluation for residents of the Lake Whatcom watershed region. Pesticides used to control crane flies have been found in storm water runoff, although we are finding that many insecticide applications may be unnecessary. Our purpose in conducting this study is to determine whether or not crane flies actually pose a problem, and to advise residents about pesticide use.

If you live in the watershed area, or know people who do, please sign up to be a part of this survey. An application may be found at <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/cranefly> or you can call the office and leave your name. If you would like to help conduct the sampling, please e-mail or call Jill Cotton (jillcotton@aol.com, 360/766-7006). The survey will be done on a Saturday morning. All equipment and instruction will be supplied. Thank you all.

Plant of the Month By Cheryl Greenwood Kinsley

Scarlet Windflower

Family: Ranunculaceae
(Buttercup family)
Genus: *Anemone*
Featured hybrid:
Anemone x fulgens



I think of “wind” when I think of March. This has nothing to do with the fact that I live in the Pacific Northwest. No, it stems from my elementary-school days, when I loved to help my teachers with their monthly bulletin boards. Each month had something fun and interesting to color and cut out...all except for March. Wedged between the flashy red hearts for February and the baskets and bouquets of pastel flowers for April, March offered only uniformly sized and all-green shamrocks. Not much decorating potential there. The teachers always ended up relying on one particular image, year after year. Even today, when I see a March calendar, I can still visualize Mr. Wind, a puffy cloud of a creature with his friendly eyes, pouched cheeks, and pursed lips, pushing breezes across the days of March from the upper left corner of the bulletin board.

So wind it will be for the Plant of the Month this March—in the form of windflower, the common name given by many people to all spring-blooming anemones. Even the genus name, *Anemone*, derives from the Greek and means “daughter of the wind,” or so say many. Others hold to the theory that the name originated with *Naamaan*, the Semitic form of Adonis, drops of whose spilled blood were said to have turned into *A. coronaria*. Brightly colored anemones are thought to be the Biblical “lilies of the field.” Without putting too fine a point on word origins here, we can know that the spring-blooming forms of *Anemone* are ancient and native to the Mediterranean and Middle East.

The specific plant featured this month is *Anemone x fulgens*, a hybrid noted for its scarlet flowers—when *fulgens* is spotted as a modifier, the subject is going to be flashy and, most often, red. *Anemone x fulgens* follows that lead. Its color might slip over into “garish” if it weren’t part of Mother Nature’s color scheme. Let’s face it, she can get away with color combinations that would make us mere mortals swoon if we were stuck with them in our living

rooms. Take a look at some of the Grecian wallflowers (*A. blanda*), for example. Interestingly, the colors of autumn-blooming anemones are much more delicate—but the fall bloomers of this genus will have to be left for a later column. Suffice it to say that there are more than 120 species of *Anemone*, and more named varieties and cultivars. If they catch your fancy, you can have steady anemone blooms through three seasons.

Your *Anemone x fulgens*—a hybrid according to botanists that is often assumed by horticulturalists to be a species, when they drop the x—grows from small black tubers that should be planted from October to November in Whatcom County. You can make successive plantings for staggered blooms. Look for the faint circle that marks the smoother top of the tubers, and plant them with their “feet” facing down, placed about 3 inches below the surface in a sunny bed with a rich soil mix, amended with bone meal or bulb food applied according to package directions. If you do not plan to thoroughly moisten the bed immediately after planting, then soak the tubers for a few hours just before you put them in the ground. To be on the safe side, you might want to mulch the beds and be prepared to gently move your mulch aside in the spring to check for signs of growth, at which point you’ll want to have your snail deterrent of choice, handy.

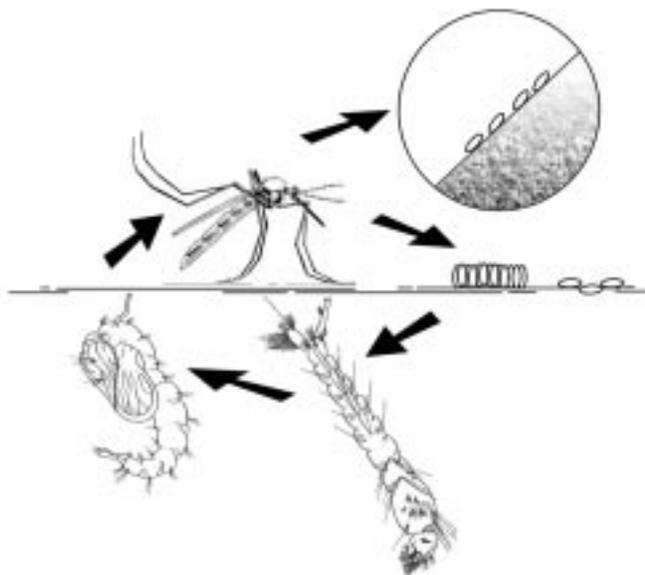
If you didn’t put any tubers out last fall but you *must* have anemones this spring, you can find growing varieties in the nursery centers soon. *Anemone x fulgens* can be spotted because of the red flowers, two inches across, with no white on them. The named St. Bavo strain offers a range of reds, from pinkish to rusty. *Anemone x fulgens* is larger than the commonly seen *A. coronaria* hybrids, marked by white at the base of their petals, but it has the same green collar just below the bloom, which rises on a single stem that can reach higher than 18 inches. When you find them, plant your *Anemone x fulgens* in rich soil in a bed with at least partial sun, treat them well with ample water, and enjoy their bloom for up to four weeks. Don’t count on these—or others from tubers you’ve planted—to return next spring, however. Anemones are notoriously balky about repeat blooms. If you want to try, be sure and leave all foliage on the plant until it’s completely dry. The old books suggest putting a pane of glass right on top and leaving it there until the foliage has not a trace of life left. Then lift the tuber, dust it off, and store it for the summer in a cool, dry place before setting it out again in the fall. Anemones will not naturalize; and they will require this special treatment each year. Some of us prefer to buy “new” tubers every fall.

Anemones can be grown from seed, if you have the time and the inclination. There is quite a wonderful story—perhaps apocryphal, perhaps not—that the first successfully bred anemones in Europe in the 17th century were controlled by a mean-spirited gardener who refused to share them with anyone else. A gentleman came to call—some say a horticulturalist, some say a city official—when the seeds on the anemones were ripe. The clever visitor wore a long cloak and made sure it swept over the flower beds as he walked past. Once safely home, he removed the seeds from the hem of his coat, planted them, and nurtured them carefully. He shared with everyone.

You’ll not have to go to as much trouble to enjoy windflowers this spring. Oh, by the way—I never did learn to draw Mr. Wind properly. I still think of him when March rolls around—but now, I know that the wind doesn’t only blow in March, and it doesn’t always come from the upper left corner of life.

Garden Friends & Foes By Todd Murray

West Nile Virus



Well, I might have to eat my words once again. In 2000, I had written a “Garden Friends and Foes” article about mosquito management. In it, I mentioned West Nile Virus (WNV) and its potential problem in our area. I said that it wouldn’t be a big problem. This, I believe, is still the case. However, since that time, the virus has rapidly spread across North America, faster than most people figured.

In 1999 WNV was identified in four states along the eastern coast of the US around New York. In 2000, the virus spread to about seven more states plus Washington D.C. In 2001, the virus was detected in 27 states. By the end of 2002, WNV had spread to 44 (+D.C.) and it has been detected in Whatcom County. Last November, a horse fell ill from WNV in Whatcom County but regained its health over this winter.

West Nile Virus is a viral disease of birds. Female mosquitoes transmit this disease from bird to bird by feeding on blood. If an infected mosquito bites a person, horse or some other types of wildlife, they may become sick. These other hosts are called “dead end” hosts because the virus cannot be transmitted from these hosts. People and horses infected with West Nile virus can die from infections, however the fatality rate is very low, much lower than fatalities associated with influenza.

If WNV grabs the attention of Whatcom County residents this next summer, the Master Gardeners will be most people’s first place to get mosquito management information. So over the next couple of months, we will provide you with the resources you need to help people learn more about good mosquito management. If you would like the information before it appears in the Weeder’s Digest, visit our West Nile Virus website: <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/commun/wnv.htm>

Guidelines for Reducing Mosquitoes at Home

The first step to reducing mosquito problems is to understand their lifecycles and habitat needs. Mosquito lifecycles and habitats can vary among species. However, all mosquitoes require water to complete their lifecycle. Female mosquitoes require a meal of blood to produce eggs, which may be laid directly on the water’s surface or on moist soil adjacent to water, depending on the kind of mosquito. Mosquito larvae (called wigglers) suspend themselves in shallow water and filter the water to feed on organic debris. The larvae pupate into tumblers and then emerge as adults. This lifecycle can happen rapidly, as short as seven days.

Eliminating or managing standing water around your house is the best method to prevent mosquitoes from breeding in your backyard. The following guidelines will help you identify potential problem areas around your yard.

Eliminate water-trapping containers:

- Properly recycle or dispose of cans, plastic and ceramic pots or other water-trapping containers.
- Recycle old tires; contact your local solid waste management facility.
- Store un-mounted tires so that they don’t collect rainwater.
- Place tight covers or screens over cisterns, fire barrels, rain barrels, tubs, septic tanks and other water collectors.

Regularly drain water-trapping containers:

- Change birdbath water every week (more frequently during summer).
- Drill drainage holes in planters, boxes and tires left or used outdoors.
- Regularly drain pet dishes and plant pot saucers.
- Empty uncovered rain barrels every week (more frequently during summer).
- Regularly clean and repair gutters to prevent them from retaining water.
- Regularly check and drain plastic covers and tarps used outside such as pool covers, Jacuzzi covers, garbage can lids, compost covers and gardening tarps.
- Store water-trapping containers such as wading pools, wheelbarrows and buckets upside down or inside shelters.

Fill in or landscape water-trapping areas of your yard:

- Fill in tree holes with sand or mortar, or develop drain-holes so water cannot accumulate.
- Fill or drain seepage ponds and puddles.

Weed of the MonthBy Laurel Shiner

Kudzu

Pueraria lobata



THREAT: Kudzu, a native of Japan, was introduced to North America in 1876 as an ornamental, and was later promoted for livestock forage and erosion control. It is an extremely aggressive perennial vine. Kudzu vines can grow up to one-foot a day, during peak growing season, (up to 60 feet in a growing season) and climbs over anything in its way. In the southeastern U.S., where it is now common, kudzu has caused power outages by toppling power poles and trees. Aside from damaging trees due to its sheer weight, the vine can also kill other vegetation by blocking out all light and by girdling trunks. Kudzu grows in a variety of habitats and environmental conditions, and rapidly invades disturbed areas. It outcompetes native vegetation and causes a loss of wildlife habitat, as well as impacting agriculture and timber production. It reproduces by seed and by spreading roots that develop adventitious shoots. Birds and mammals can disperse seeds. Kudzu has recently been found in Oregon and the first site in Washington was found in 2001, in Clark County.

DESCRIPTION: Kudzu is a perennial, climbing or trailing vine, in the legume family. The stems of this plant are semi-woody, growing up to 4 inches in diameter and 100 feet in length. Young vines are covered with tan to bronze hairs, older vines are usually hairless. The dark green leaves are made up of three leaflets, each leaflet having 1 to 3 lobes. The leaflets have hairs on both sides and are usually 3 to 4 inches long. Leaves are dropped in the fall and vines grow new leaves in the spring. Up to 30 vines may radiate from one root crown. The roots are fleshy, with the taproot reaching 6 feet or more in length, 7 inches in diameter and weighing up to 400 pounds. Vines will root at the node, where they contact soil. The connection to the mother plant eventually dies and a completely new plant develops from these roots. The reddish-purple, pea-like, fragrant flowers appear in late summer. The individual flowers are just under an inch across and are borne in hanging clusters, up to 7 inches long, at leaf axils. They produce a flattened, hairy pod, growing up to 3 inches long. Each pod contains numerous kidney-shaped

seeds, looking similar to dried beans.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: Kudzu can be controlled using mechanical or chemical means. Mechanical options include cutting, disking and digging. Persistent cutting of small stands may eventually kill out the roots. Cutting can also be used in conjunction with herbicides. Old established stands are difficult to eradicate with mechanical means due to the size and depth of the root system. Overgrazing by cattle has been used as a control method and works best on younger stands. Cattle are used to keep the plants defoliated for 3 to 4 growing seasons. This basically starves the roots out. For chemical recommendations, contact the weed control board. For any method used, the area must be rechecked for several seasons to ensure eradication is complete.

Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board, 901 W. Smith Rd., Bellingham, WA 98226, (360) 354-3990

Dividing Perennials

~Karen Gilliam

These are some tips to help pot up the plants for our plant sale. We would like to have each member donate at least 2 flats.

The sooner the perennials are divided and potted, the more established they will be for our plant sale May 10. With the mild winter there is some active growth already. When transplanting, please trim the roots to fit the pot. They will re-grow producing a much healthier plant than if they are wrapped or stuffed into the pot. Roots are the most tender part of the plant, so if we have extreme cold, be sure the pots are mulched or buried to prevent them from freezing.

Hostas, daylily, hellebore, astilbe, purple cone flower, and plants that have a solid crown can be divided with a sharp shovel or knife. Some of the crown may be injured in this process. Pot the extra divisions and replant the plant you want to keep in the garden. Or slice off the crowns that you want to pot and leave the rest undisturbed in your garden. Be sure to cut away the injured roots to prevent disease. If the plant is not too big, sometimes you can rinse the water from the roots and tease the crowns apart. There will be less damage, and therefore more divisions, but it is difficult with large plants.

Plants like hardy geraniums, heuchera, Maidenhair fern, bergenia and columbine, can be divided by slicing off an offset that has a piece of the crown and some root. Pot each division and keep moist. (Sometimes a plastic bag will help keep the humidity and prevent drying out.) With TLC and some luck, additional roots will grow and it will become a nice plant.

Some plants like euphorbia, poppy, feverfew, borage, viola, and cosmos, will seed around and can be simply transplanted. With a little food, they will grow quickly.

Most groundcovers can be easily divided. As with all divisions the outside and youngest parts of the plant are the most vigorous. Save these and discard the middle of the clump if you have too many.

Pots, labels, and compost are all available at Hovander. Contact Linda Bergquist 360/371-5334 or Diane Raposa 360/676-9563 if you need more info, or help to get plants out of your garden. Remember to limit to 1 flat per variety unless you check with our coordinators first. We would like to have all the plants labeled with as complete information as you have. Writing with a lead pencil on the label is very durable and can be recycled if necessary.

If I can be of help in advising how to divide or pot, please call me, Karen Gilliam 360/384-4562

Master Composter/Recycler program HEATS UP in March.

Home composting and recycling have a significant positive impact on our county environment. Protecting the environment begins at home. If you want to make a difference and are interested in learning more about composting and recycling principles to reduce trash output, consider becoming a Master Composter/Recycler.

The Whatcom County Master Composter/Recycler training program, sponsored by Whatcom County and WSU Cooperative Extension has provided educational programs and support to help increase the amount of yard and other organics composted at home in the county for over 10 years. Backyard composting and vermicomposting are the most cost effective way of managing organics generated at home, since they reduce or eliminate costs for collection and processing the materials by other processors.

The six-week training program for new volunteers begins March 19, and continues every Wednesday evening from 7 – 9 p.m., until April 23. There are fieldtrips to interesting county compost/recycling operations scheduled for 4 Saturday mornings.

The program uses a “train the trainer” technique. Volunteers interested in enhancing their home composting skills, but who also are interested in helping others in the community begin composting are trained to teach others. These volunteers multiply the effectiveness of local compost and recycling coordinators by volunteering their time to teach classes and workshops, visit schools, staff booths, write articles, maintain demonstration sites and perform other outreach activities that couldn't be done by one person.

Volunteers bring the message back to both their home and work communities. They help in many ways, for example, maintaining the compost demonstration site, giving backyard compost programs, teaching worm composting to kids and adults, manning information booths, and spearheading efforts to convince their community to provide a composting space for all homeowners.

If you love good soil, enjoy talking with people and don't mind getting “dirty”, think about joining Master Composter/Recycler training. For more information, call 360/676-6736 or e-mail: joycej@coopext.cahe.wsu.edu. An application can be found on the compost website: <http://www.whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/compost/>

Help us leave less mess for the future!

Garden Friends and Foes

continued from page 5

- Grade or fill low areas to prevent standing water.
- Check and repair leaky irrigation systems, pipes and faucets.
- To avoid puddles, do not over-water your lawn and garden.

Manage habitats in and around water bodies such as ornamental and retention ponds, ditches and catch basins:

- Manage weeds; keep vegetation short around water. Adult mosquitoes are attracted to dense, tall vegetation around water.
- Remove unnecessary floating structures or debris from ponds. Mosquitoes are often found around floating debris.
- Keep drains, ditches and culverts clean to allow proper drainage.
- Consider stocking ornamental or permanent, self-contained ponds with insect-eating fish, such as goldfish.
- Shape pond edges to a shelf or steep slope. Mosquitoes prefer shallow pond edges.

Using insecticides to manage mosquitoes:

Using pesticides to kill adult mosquitoes is not practical and often not successful in your backyard. Suppression of adult mosquitoes is temporary and will not solve mosquito problems. (See “Guidelines for Preventing Mosquito Bites” in next month's article.)

Using insecticides to kill mosquito larva around the home and yard is not recommended as the only control method. Due to concerns about pesticide contamination of surface water, many restrictions apply in Washington State. According to current Washington state law, only a few pesticides are available for use in contained water bodies by homeowners without a Washington State Department of Agriculture pesticide license. Individual landowner insecticide management of mosquitoes is rarely effective; management for mosquitoes is best achieved as a regional/municipal effort. Contact your local government for mosquito abatement information.

To learn more about West Nile Virus see the following web sites:

Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>

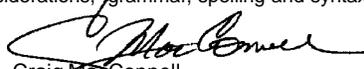
Washington State Department of Health: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/WNV.html>



Weeder's Digest is the monthly newsletter for the Whatcom County Master Gardener Program. Guest articles are encouraged. Please submit typewritten articles by the third Wednesday of each month to Karri at the Master Gardener Office. Articles can also be submitted by e-mail to: karrimac@coopext.cahe.wsu.edu. Editor uses MS Word for Windows and PageMaker 6.5. Any articles prepared on other programs or platforms should be saved as Text Files or Rich Text Files. Editor reserves the right to edit for space considerations, grammar, spelling and syntax.



Master Gardener Office:
Courthouse Annex 1000 N. Forest St.
Bellingham, WA 98225 360/676-6736


Craig MacConnell
Horticulture Agent

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
P.O. Box 646230

PRSRST STD
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
USDA
PERMIT No. G268

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300



**MASTER
GARDENER**

Dates to Remember:

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|--|
| March 4 | All Day | First Day of MG Training
Extension Office |
| March 6 | 10 a.m. to Noon | MG Foundation Board Meeting
Extension Office |
| March 8 | All Day | Tree Fruit Workshop
Mt. Vernon Research Station |
| March 13 | 7 to 9 p.m. | Monthly Foundation Meeting
Extension Office |
| March 18 | 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. | Bonsai Workshop |
| Wednesdays | 8 to 9 a.m. | Master Gardener breakfasts
Babe's in Ferndale |