

# Weeder's Digest

## MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR

Hello Master Gardeners,

Congratulations to our Master Gardener Class of 2009 for successfully completing their basic training! Please join me in welcoming our new interns.



## CALENDAR

Thursday, May 7  
 Foundation Board Meeting  
 Extension Meeting Room,  
 10:00 a.m. to Noon

Thursday, May 14  
 Foundation Meeting  
 (See article for details)

Ongoing  
 Master Gardener Breakfasts  
 Babe's in Ferndale  
 Wednesdays, 7:45 -9 a.m.

**Mark your Calendar**  
Thursday, October 1  
 Whatcom County Advance  
 Training, Bellingham

# IMPORTANT NEWS FOR ALL OF US

**EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY**, WSU has introduced a new on-line way we are to report our volunteer hours.

Dean of Extension, Dr Linda Kirk Fox writes:

*“Washington State law requires that all volunteers working in support of WSU programs are covered by worker compensation insurance. Recently the Washington State Department of Labor and Industry determined that WSU Extension must also quantify the dates and number of hours that volunteers work to determine the amount of insurance that must be purchased to adequately cover our volunteers. To comply with this ruling, WSU Extension developed an online tool to facilitate collection and analysis of volunteer contributions. The system will be sequentially launched to each WSU Extension volunteer-based program. WSU Master Gardeners have begun using the system and are providing feedback. The statewide 4-H leader network will begin entering data into the system in fall of 2009. Once 4-H leaders and Master Gardeners are actively using the system, other volunteer-based programs will be contacted to begin training and implementation.”*

Please begin recording your volunteer hours and continuing education hours online. You may want to print these instructions or otherwise save them.

## How Volunteers Add Hours

- Log on to <http://ext.wsu.edu/testVolunteer/>
- Your user name is your complete email address. If you

are unable to log on using your email address, please try a previous email address. If you do not have an email address, your user name is your name with no spaces (example: richardsteele, donnaberry)

Your password is password! (don't forget the exclamation point) You will be able to change your password later after you have registered.

The first time you log on, you will be asked some contact information.

- Select **“Volunteers”**
- Click **“Enter Activity”**. At this time, there are only 4 choices:

Answer/Plant Clinic (select this option if you are recording hours you have worked at the office, another clinic, or have worked at home answering questions from the public)

Continuing Education (select this if you are recording hours you have received approved continuing education. Veterans are required to get 10 hours per year)

Other Educational Delivery (select this for all approved projects, classes or seminars you've taught or articles written)

and

Program Support (this refers to activities such as helping with basic training or other activities I may request help with)

- Select the appropriate information from each of the dropdown lists.
- Select the date on which the activity occurred. You may have to use the navigation arrows on the calendar to get to the correct month. You can enter multiple activities for the same day. However, each activity must have

a different start and end time.

- Master Gardener and Beach Watcher volunteers must enter demographic contact information (sex and race). This refers to the number of people you talked with while volunteering at that activity. The information about sex and race is actually required by law. Its OK to guess if you have to. If there were no contacts, leave the boxes blank.

- Click **“Save”**

- After you save a record, there will be a message at the top of the page to indicate that the record was saved. At this point you may choose another menu item on the left, logout, or add a new record. If you add a new record, simply change the information needed to reflect the new activity. You may click the “Clear the Form” button to start with a blank record.

You will notice that at this time, there is no choice for ‘Foundation Activities’. We are still allowing volunteers to count up to 10 hours for general maintenance at Hovander and 6 hours for the plant sale. In order to submit your hours for these activities, you will still need to do so online at our private website, or just send me a note when you've completed them all. I don't feel like I need to get these every month.

Please send me any comments you may have about the new online system and I will compile them all and send them to WSU in a month or two.

Thanks, and hope you are enjoying spring!

Jill

# WHATCOM WEEDS:

## ARROW ARUM — PELTANDRA VIRGINICA

By LAUREL BALDWIN & MONETTE BOSWELL



Picture from: Robert H. Mohlenbrock @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / USDA SCS. 1991. Southern wetland flora: Field office guide to plant species. South National Technical Center, Fort Worth.

**THREAT:** Arrow arum, also known as tuckahoe, is a native of the southeastern and eastern United States. It has recently been found growing in Lake Terrell, in Whatcom County, which is the first time that this plant has been found in Washington State. It is unknown how it was introduced to this area. Arrow arum is a wetland plant, growing in still or slow moving shallow water and along banks of wetlands. It will grow in full sun to shade, and fresh to slightly brackish water. Arrow arum reproduces by seeds, which are water dispersed, and vegetatively, through root fragments. The fruits and seeds are eaten (and possibly spread) by waterfowl. However, it is toxic to livestock and humans (unless dried or well cooked), and can cause skin irritation.

**DESCRIPTION:** Arrow arum is a perennial grows 1 to 2 feet high. The arrow-shaped leaves are 8-20 inches long and up to 6-12 inches wide, and grow on stalks that can be up to 3 feet in length. The shiny green leaves have whitish undersides, with 3 prominent veins. These prominent veins are useful in distinguishing arrow arum from other arrow-leaved species. The tiny flowers are white, light yellow or green, and are borne in a spike, surrounded by a yellowish green, hooded sheath, which is 4 to 7 inches in length. Depending on its location, arrow arum flowers between April and July. After flowering, the sheath surrounding the flowers slowly decays, exposing a pod of greenish or blackish berry-like fruit. Arrow arum has rhizomatous roots.



Pictures from: Connecticut Botanical Society. Taken by Janet Novak. <http://www.ct-botanical-society.org/galleries/peltandravirg.html>



**MANAGEMENT OPTIONS:** Little is known about the control of arrow arum. Contact the weed board for site-specific recommendations.

Laurel Baldwin & Monette Boswell can be reached through the Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board. 901 W. Smith Rd, Bellingham, WA 98226. Phone: 360.715-7470 <http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/publicworks/weeds>

## Master Gardener Advanced-Education Conference for 2009

September 24-26, 2009, Master Gardener Advanced-Education Conference, on the WSU Pulman Campus.

**Topics:** Science, society, and sustainable food systems; Eco-lawns; Root diseases; and more!

**Tours/Workshops:** Plant ID: spotting invasive species before they establish; WSU insect collection and insect ID services; Sustainable horticulture demo gardens; and WSU Organic Farm

**Volunteer Skills:** Committees that work!; Master Gardener Online Training; Working with low income audiences; and Roundtable topics.

**Kyeno Speaker:** Jack Nisbet, is a teacher, naturalist and author. His teaching, presentations, writing, and museum work all involve going outside and watching things grow.

Watch for registration and schedule updates at <http://mastergardener.wsu.edu/mgfws/>

# GARDEN FRIENDS & FOES:

## HEMEROCALLIS GALL MIDGE (DAYLILY MIDGE)

### CONTARINIA QUINQUE

By Katherine Harrison



Normal Bud



Infested bud

*The "Friends and Foes" article is going through yet another transition. It started close to 10 years ago with Todd Murray's writings, transitioned to Kristine Schlamp, and I have been writing it for the past two years. Now, it will go through another transition. Starting this month we will have two wonderful Master Gardeners, Katherine Harrison and Cynthia Poppe, taking over writing the monthly column. I have enjoyed writing this column, but am excited for a new era of talent to grace the pages of the Weeder's Digest. Enjoy, and if you have any suggestions for columns, please let me know: [cburrows@wsu.edu](mailto:cburrows@wsu.edu)*

Sincerely, Colleen Burrows

The Hemerocallis Gall Midge, also known as the Daylily Midge (*Contarinia quinque-notata*) has been a problem in Europe for over 20 years. It was seen in the Vancouver, B.C. area in 2001 and it continues to spread, affecting daylily growers and home gardeners alike. Our very own Jill Cotton identified the midge in Whatcom County last year.

Hardly anyone notices the adults of this species, which are tiny gnat-like flies. After overwintering underground as pupae, they emerge in mid-spring, usually from early May through the end of June. The females lay eggs on daylily flower buds. When the eggs hatch, the 2-3 mm whitish larvae (maggots) cause extensive damage to the bud, resulting in distorted bud shape and failure to open normally.



Maggots (small dots near center of photo) with infested buds

Cut open, infested buds are mushy at the base and contain anywhere from a few maggots to over 300, most commonly 50 or less. The buds drop to the ground, and the maggots move

into the soil to pupate. Fortunately, there is only one generation per year, so daylily varieties that bloom later than early July usually escape damage.

There are no pesticides approved for the home gardener for use against daylily midge. The best control is to be vigilant during the late spring and early summer, hand picking any buds possibly infested. Do not compost these buds. Burning is the best disposal method, but if not practical, disposal in a sealed container in household garbage or submerge in rubbing alcohol. Gardeners can limit the next year's damage by eliminating as many larvae as possible.

Another tactic is to plant cultivars which bloom later in the season after the midge is no longer flying. Some commercial growers have tried "trap plants" or cultivars that have proven to be particularly attractive to adult flies, usually early blooming yellow daylilies. These growers have been able to limit most damage to a few plants which can be patrolled daily for abnormal buds. Although some growers swear by trap plants, other studies indicate limited value in our area.

Gardeners wishing to limit the risk of importing this pest would be wise to buy daylilies bare root rather than in pots, particularly if the plants have already set buds.



Magnified view of maggots

As Master Gardeners we should all be aware of this new pest. Keep close watch on your own daylilies for deformed buds, talk to your friends and neighbors about the problem, and keep the midge in mind when asked about abnormal daylily buds or failure to flower when staffing the clinic.

Additional information:

Royal Horticultural Society: <http://web.ncf.ca/ah748/rhs.html>

UBC Botanical Garden: <http://www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org/forums/showthread.php?p=191207>

B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands: <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/cropprot/daylilymidge.htm>

# GARDENERS' JOURNAL:

## THE MAKING OF A GARDEN (OR THE PERILS OF PAULINE'S GARDEN) PART 2

BY KATHERINE (KATHY) HARRISON

(This article is a continuation of a series started in August 2008 on my experiences building a garden on a new site, starting from bare ground.)

When last we left our heroine's garden, it was the end of summer. Despite the usual misfortunes, there was a garden site in place, though precious little in the way of desirable plants. Now it was time to begin the planting.

Of the seedlings planted in haste in July, *Agastache rupestris* and *Salvia greggii* seemed to be the ones that survived in greatest numbers. There were also a few others that showed promise. I decided to leave them in place in their temporary quarters until I had a better idea of where to place them. Not having lived on site for more than a few months, I wanted to see what conditions would be like throughout the year in the different areas of the lot before committing to permanent beds.

By late summer, the blackberries were growing like Kudzu. I swear that I cut back long vicious canes from around the driveway one day only to find them back and twice as long the next. Finally we got serious and resorted to the bushhog. Once the leaves dropped we were able to do some real damage to them and cleared about two thirds of the lot, including all the area close to the house. I know that this was only the first battle, though, and we will be back at it again all summer and fall for years to come.

In October, the nurseries were having their end-of-season sales. I took advantage of this, plus the promised free watering from nature, to plant a tiny orchard. One of our neighbors has a variety of fruit trees on the north end of her lot, so we planted adjacent to hers so we can share pollinators. I planted a mini-dwarf Liberty apple and dwarf Montmorency cherry that I had grafted the past couple of years at the grafting clinic. I also planted Rainier and Lapins cherries, and Methley and

Rosy Gage plums. The plums are not really good pollinators for each other (although Methley is rated as self-fertile) but the neighboring plums should cover the Rosy Gage.

I also bought some Lawson cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Ellwood's Pillar') to plant between the carport and the guest parking area. They are columnar with bluish green foliage and are moderately slow growing. They should grow into an interesting informal hedge and foil for some lower growing plantings at a later date.

Wood chips turned out to be harder to find than I had anticipated. Since Ferndale is not a heavily wooded area, locating tree services doing work in the neighborhood was unexpectedly difficult (i.e. I never found one.) I called the county to sign up for delivery of chips and was referred to Puget Sound Energy, who told me they would put me on a list. That was about 6 months ago, and I've not heard a word since. We did haul a few utility trailer loads from a county site not far from our house. (Thank you, fellow master gardeners, for the information.) Instead of having a large portion of the disturbed land covered in chips, I only managed to cover a few critical areas.

Having attended the "no-till/low-till" talk given by a couple of the new master gardeners, I decided to try a no-till vegetable garden and ornamental bed. The ornamental bed was planted with some divisions from a generous fellow master gardener and seems to be doing well so far, except for a couple of plants pulled out by the roots by the deer.

The vegetable garden was laid out in early November, covered with newspaper and then various mulching materials. I plan to double fence it against the deer – a 4 foot fence at the outer perimeter, then a 4 foot gap, then a 6 foot fence (4 feet of wire raised 2 feet off the ground) as an inner barrier. The theory is that

deer don't like to jump into narrow enclosures, and if they don't think they can clear both fences, they won't attempt it. (It's a nice theory. I hope it works.) There will be space for a path around the inside of the outer fence, then planting space on each side and under the inner fence. There will be another path between this bed and a bed in the middle of the inner area. The whole thing looks a little like a medieval knot garden, but with veggies in addition to herbs.

Another fall activity was propagating lots of shrubs from cuttings donated by several people. I tried live staking some and propagating some in pots. Although it is still a little early to tell, it looks as though a good number of them in both groups made it through the winter, with the exception of the red twigged dogwoods, which were all pulled up and/or eaten by deer. None of the cuttings will be ready for this year's plant sale, but there should be some for next year, plus some for me.

In March I bought a number of trees and shrubs from the Whatcom County Conservation District Native Plant Sale. We planted a couple of small groves of trees, carefully sited so as not to block the view that was the whole reason for buying our lot in the first place. Part of gardening is learning to look at a plant as it will be years from now before planting it. Now all I have to do is to wait 10 or 20 years and I will have a place to start my shade garden.

So, much has been done, but it is still only scratching the surface of what needs to be done to make this the garden of my dreams. Of course, if it were all finished, what would I have to plan for next year?

# GARDEN TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

By KEN TARR



Certain tools are essential for all gardening jobs; others are needed only for more specialized task. It is inadvisable, however, to invest in gadgets that are useful only on rare occasions, or in heavy-duty equipment for the average garden. (The latter can be rented more cheaply on a daily basis). Buying a small number of traditional good-quality tools that will last a lifetime is better value for the money than spending your entire budget on so-called bargain products, which are often inferior in use and may break down or wear out quickly.

## Hand Tools

Almost every gardener will need a spade, fork, rake, hoe, trowel, and a pair of pruning shears. If a lawn forms a large part of your garden, then a lawn rake, weed eater or edging tool will be as useful as the essential lawn mower.

Hedge shears will be needed for trimming a hedge, (power shears or hedge trimmers are a more expensive option). Well-known brand names are the safest buy, but before you buy decide whether a particular tool is suitable for your needs. Handle the tool before you buy it, checking its weight, strength and comfort. One brand or model may be ideal for a tall or very strong person, while another may be better for a short or less powerful person.

Pruning shears in particular must feel comfortable in your palm. There are many to choose from. Buy one that fits your hand the best so you don't get blisters after prolonged use.

Spades and garden forks usually have high-carbon steel heads and are given a coat of paint to protect them from rusting. Once the paint wears off, regular wiping with an oily cloth keeps the head in good order. The spray on cooking spray like Pam works well if you have it. Stainless steel and chromium-plated tines are available at extra cost. If the surface is not scratched and pitted, they will maintain their shine for many years. Polished surfaces are easier to push into the soil than pitted, rusty ones.

Next Time: Care of Tools



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The Weeder's Digest is the monthly newsletter of the Whatcom County Master Gardener Program. Guest articles are encouraged. Please submit typewritten articles by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month to Cheryl Kahle ([ckahle@wsu.edu](mailto:ckahle@wsu.edu)) at the Extension Office. Editor reserves the right to edit for space considerations, grammar, spelling and syntax.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig MacConnell".

Craig MacConnell  
Horticulture Agent

