



Master Gardener Newsletter



WSU EXTENSION
Cowlitz County

FEBRUARY 2023
304 COWLITZ WAY,
KELSO, WA 98626

REFLECTIONS FROM THE GARDEN

Gary Fredricks

“Some of the world's greatest feats were accomplished by people not smart enough to know they were impossible.” ~ Doug Larson

I have had several questions concerning Continuing Education for the WSU MG. I hope the following will provide some clarity. Remember, if in doubt, you can always contact me.

WSU Extension Office

Phone: 360-577-3014

Gary Fredricks, WSU Cowlitz County

Extension Director,

360-577-3014 Extension 3

E-mail:

FredricksG@cowlitzwa.gov

WSU Gardening Websites

mastergardener.wsu.edu/

gardening.wsu.edu

cowlitz.wsu.edu

HortSense Fact Sheets

hortsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu/

PestSense Fact Sheets

pestsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu/

WSU Educational Pubs

<http://pubs.wsu.edu>

WSU Cowlitz Co. MGs

extension.wsu.edu/cowlitz/

mg/

Master Gardener Foundation

www.cowlitzcomg.com/

Reasonable accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities and special needs who contact the office at least two weeks prior to the event. Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.

Continuing Education Policy for WSU MG Volunteers

There is a minimum state requirement for veteran MG volunteers to acquire 10 hours of CE (continuing education) per year to qualify for recertification. The purpose of obtaining CE hours is to improve volunteer knowledge and skill base for performing work as community educators in horticulture and environmental stewardship. The guidelines below outline what does and what does not qualify for CE. **Only those hours that qualify for CE hours, as outlined below, are reportable to the WSU Online Volunteer Database.** If you have any questions about a specific event and whether it qualifies for CE, please contact your MG Program Coordinator.

What qualifies for CE?

- Horticulture courses given by WSU, including re-taking basic MG training
- Webinars, field trips, and workshops sponsored by Extension
- Classes offered by accredited institutions: community colleges, technical colleges, universities
- WA State Dept. of Agriculture approved pesticide classes
- Classes taught by professional associations such as WA State Nursery and Landscape Association, WA Association of Landscape Professionals, International Society of Arboriculture, etc.
- Time spent doing research preparing a MG presentation which is then delivered to the community (limit of 4 times the length of the talk).
- Time spent doing research for a newspaper or MG newsletter, article which is then published (limit 4 hours)
- Other activities, including training on how programs are planned, delivered or evaluated; presentation skills; meeting facilitation; etc. may qualify. Contact your Program Coordinator for pre-approval.

What does not qualify for CE?

- Food preservation or preparation classes
- Personal trips and tours not pre-approved by the program coordinator
- Out-of-state conferences, field trips, and garden tours unless they are sponsored or hosted by WSU Extension, approved by the MG Program Coordinator, *and* relevant to the mission of the MG Program.
- Garden craft or photography classes
- Personal research or reading not related to a MG project
- Travel time to and from events unless approved by your program coordinator

Announcements

Plant and Insect Clinic is open!
In-clinic visits, calls, and emails. In office April-
Oct: MWF, Nov-March: Wed. only, 10-noon.
360-577-3014 Ext. 1

All of our workshops-with slides, handouts,
and videos: [cowlitzcomg.com/workshops-
videos](http://cowlitzcomg.com/workshops-videos)

In this issue

If you enjoy the MG articles below,
PLEASE LET THE AUTHOR KNOW!

- ◆ [Reflections from the Garden](#) Gary Fredricks
- ◆ [Foundation news](#) Art Fuller
- ◆ [Plant Sale update](#) Cheryl Coddington
- ◆ [MGs reporting: Garden Mistakes](#)
- ◆ [How to add organic nitrogen to your garden](#) Guest contributor, Chip Bubl
- ◆ [MG Poetry corner](#) Louise Bozorth
- ◆ [Birthday Party invitation!](#)
- ◆ [Foundation Mtg. Minutes](#)

Log your Volunteer Hours



wsu.givepulse.com/group/453100-WSU-Cowlitz-County-Master-Gardeners

[wsu.givepulse.com/group/453100-WSU-
Cowlitz-County-Master-Gardeners](http://wsu.givepulse.com/group/453100-WSU-Cowlitz-County-Master-Gardeners)

- Article Opportunity -

If you specialize in a specific type of gardening, then why not share your knowledge by writing a short article for the newsletter? It's a great way to contribute, and help inspire fellow gardeners. Not to mention that the time spent writing can be turned in as volunteer hours!

If you have an article you'd like to share, please email them to: Alice Slusher: alslush@gmail.com
Articles for February issue due March 20, 2023

Meetings & Event

Foundation Meeting

March 14, 2023

10 am- ZOOM



MASTER
GARDENER
CALENDAR

Upcoming Workshops (Tues. 12 pm on Zoom unless otherwise noted)

cowlitzcomg.com/public-events

Mar 14	Growing Blueberries	Art F.
Mar 21	Making Gardening	Dale
Mar 28	Controlling Spring Weeds	Jennifer M.
Apr 4	Growing Raspberries	Alice S.
Apr 11	Building & Managing a Raised Bed	Art F.

Master Gardener
Directory

On members' page of website

Foundation Announcements

Art Fuller (Master Gardener Foundation of Cowlitz County, President)

Several counties throughout Washington State do not have a paid Extension Coordinator position. Those counties are struggling to keep their program above water. Cowlitz County is fortunate to have a paid Extension Director/Coordinator. This position allows us as Master Gardeners to have a direct liaison to Washington State University (WSU) and to the Cowlitz County Commissioners. This connection benefits our Master Gardener Program immensely. The Extension Master Gardener program has significantly strengthened the Community's knowledge and enhanced their education on research-based horticultural practices.

The reasons we report hours in [GivePulse](#):

- 1) To receive funding from the county and support from WSU Extension.
- 2) Reporting hours is a requirement for Master Gardener recertification.
- 3) If an injury occurs while volunteering, the first thing Labor and Industry (LNI) does is check to see

if the volunteer reported the hours during when the incident occurred to ensure the claim is justifiable for LNI insurance coverage.

- 4) Justifies our program's existence to WSU and Cowlitz County Commissioners.
- 5) Data collection and reporting show how engaged our group is throughout the county and the state.
- 6) Gives us as a volunteer group bragging rights throughout the state on how much we accomplish.

I can't stress enough the importance of reporting your hours and what it does for our program. The accurate reporting of our hours gives Gary Fredricks the metrics and the ammunition he needs to keep our program afloat and supported by WSU and the County Commissioners.

Thank you for all you do!

[GivePulse tutorials on website](#)

In need of Scrap Wood and Miscellaneous items

⇒ Lumber-Used or scrap pieces of:

- 2" x 4" various lengths (8" or longer).
- 2" x 6" various lengths (12" or longer).
- 4" x 4" various lengths (12" or longer).
- 1" x 6" cedar fencing various lengths.
- plywood - 1/2", 5/8" or 3/4"
- 3/4" pine, fir or cedar - 8" or longer, any width.

⇒ 1 gallon glass jars.

Contact Art Fuller, Doug Moffett or Jerry Winchell

All of these items are transformed into craft projects for the plant sale and help in our fund-raising process.

1 gallon round or square pots



Contact Dale Wheeler, Connie Haas or Mardell Pettit



3.5-inch pots deep or regular



A word from our Plant Sale Chair

Cheryl Coddington



This time of year, the weather can be such a tease; a few days in the low to mid-50s, then a good freeze – or maybe even some snow (remembering

April snow in 2022). On those

warm days when you are out and about in the garden pining over what you might be dividing or removing for a different look, consider where the extras may go. The Plant Sale Home-growers who have divided perennials or native plants that they are willing to sell at our annual fundraiser are encouraged to contact Art Fuller or Dale Wheeler for more information. As for

the Plant Sale, preparations are currently underway and things are getting busier. Soon the greenhouse will be full of tomatoes and peppers. We will be needing volunteers to water and check the plants on a daily basis. Watch for Sign-Ups to add your name when you are able. Not only will many hands make light work, you may also get to know some new people. In the weeks ahead, there will be many other opportunities to participate as well. Interns as well as veterans are invited to participate in the Plant Sale activities, and there will always be someone to guide you with any tasks. Hope to see YOU soon!

MGs reporting: Garden Mistakes

Sounds kind of fishy, huh?

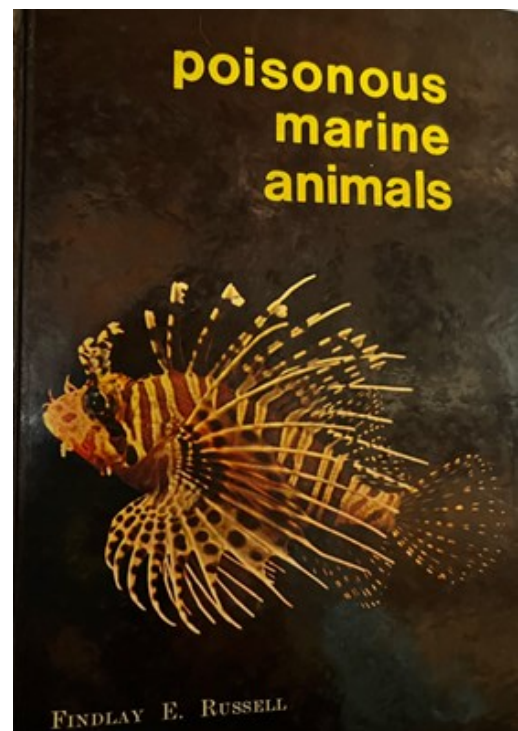
When I was around ten, I had a saltwater fish tank with a scorpion fish in it. I fed it goldfish, which I kept in a tub in the basement near the furnace. Once in a while, one would die, and I'd let it dry out.

In the spring, I would plant annuals with a dry fish at the roots.

As the years progressed, I felt increasingly sorry for what I had done to the goldfish.

When I became an "adult," I only kept "feeder" goldfish in a large, well-appointed tank. They are surprisingly long-lived.

When I moved out here to the wild west, I gave them to a friend with a large pond. When last seen, they were swimming happily with the koi.



Contributed by a Random Master Gardener



MGs reporting: Garden Mistakes

Red Tomato Tents-Both a Pro and a Con

Probably five or so years ago I purchased some red tomato (teepees-not appropriate language) tents. I saw them in a Garden Supply Catalog. They are cylindrical in shape, open at bottom and top and have vertical channels that are to be filled with water. What happens is the water heats up during the day and keeps the small plants warm through the cooler night temperatures. They also warmed the soil beneath. They worked! My small plants grew very well.

Here's the downside, the water gets hot, really hot. It is impossible to lift them up and off your plants without spilling some HOT water on the plants and on your hands and they are heavy. I haven't used them since.

In writing this, I'm thinking I may try them again this year and only fill them halfway. Why didn't I think of this before now?

Contributed by Erin Chambers-Carey



gardeners.com/buy/red-tomato-teepees/34-952.html

A "Trick" to Making Houseplant Watering Day Enjoyable!

I have a lot of houseplants, so it takes a long time to water them. I find the lengthy chore so horribly tedious that I've often considered just letting the plants die. However, I plan to donate many of them to the upcoming plant sale -- and besides, I don't know if I could live with myself if I let my plants die of thirst. So, two

weeks ago, on Watering Day, I put a Doris Day CD into the CD player (I read her biography, which turned me into a real Doris Day fan!). Now, instead of just watering the plants, I was enjoying some of my favorite music. In fact, the task now became "Listen to Favorite Music Time" (YES!) instead of "Plant Watering Time" (UGH!). I actually enjoyed watering the plants while listening to music! It was more relaxing than tedious. There's an added benefit, too. I bottom-water some of my plants and set a timer for them. Now I don't need to set a timer. When the CD is over, I check the plants and remove them from their water bath if they've had enough to drink. Next week will be "Watering Plants with Josh Groban Time!"



Contributed by Nancy Andrews

MGs reporting: Garden Mistakes

Early spring is finally here, and I'm guessing you're eagerly anticipating the start of your summer garden. Even though it's currently too chilly to start planting, it's an ideal time to strategize. What insights did you acquire from the previous year's "blunders?" Or, to put it more positively, "educational experiences." I'll be revealing some typical errors that many people, myself included, tend to make.

1 Planting too much—It begins with starting plants indoors. Each packet has 10 seeds. That's ten tiny plants that grow into 10 huge plants. Do you really need that many tomatoes or peppers? Do you actually have enough room for them in your garden? Do you have the time and energy to go out daily and monitor their health? What will you do with them at harvest? We start the growing season with unbounded enthusiasm and find that we have saddled ourselves with more work than we had ever imagined.

2 Planting too soon—I've seen this happen so many times! In their eagerness to get a jump on the sum-



Outcome of one over-enthusiastic spring planting in my garden



mer season, gardeners plant their tender summer vegetables outdoors while the soil is too cold and the temps can quickly plunge a few degrees below freezing at night. The rule of thumb in our neck of the woods is to wait until the first week of June to plant unless you are taking [steps to protect your transplants](#).

3 Crowding your plants— You know how it goes - you start off with some cute little tomato plants, and before you know it, you're squeezing in a few more because, hey, why not? But let me tell you, that's a recipe for disaster. When you crowd your plants, diseases and insects can more easily harm your plants, and the roots end up in a brutal competition for resources. Taller plants shade the smaller ones. So, please, read the instructions on the packet and follow the spacing guidelines - let's [give those plants some breathing room](#).

4 Not prepping your soil before planting—If you didn't mix in shredded leaves during autumn, you can still [add some good compost](#) now. Just spread it out and use a fork to mix it in - no need for tilling. If you're using organic granular fertilizer, apply it now, as it needs some time to do its magic. And if you want to bring your soil up to the perfect temperature, simply cover your beds with plastic for 3-4 weeks before transplanting.

5 Not rotating your crops—The basic idea behind [crop rotation](#) is to avoid planting same-family crops in the same location consecutively. This helps prevent the accumulation of pests and diseases in the soil by depriving them of a host to

MGs reporting: 7 Common Garden Mistakes



Source: Evelyn Gonzalez, UF/IFAS Master Gardener Volunteer.

Pre-heat your garden soil by covering with plastic for a few weeks before transplanting

feed on. By changing the location of the crop, you disrupt their life cycle. It is recommended to rotate the same vegetable or family of vegetables in into different locations once every 1-3 years. If you have a small garden space, another idea is to use [Grow-bags or pots](#) as alternate planting areas for a couple of years.

5 Not mulching—Don't underestimate the power of [mulching - it's like a superhero cape for your garden beds](#). Just sprinkle some grass clippings about 2-3 inches deep, and voila! You'll keep the weeds at bay, regulate soil temperatures, and maintain moisture levels like a pro. Don't use this technique if you're using weed and feed on your lawn!

6 Not planning to plant flowers to attract pollinators and beneficial insects—The insect community has some busy bees... and other helpful bugs too! Some are on pollination duty for

our precious fruits, flowers, and veggies, while others take care of pest control. [Attract them—and beautify your garden](#)—by planting flat-topped flowers like dill, daisy-like flowers like sunflower and cosmos, and mint family like catnip and Agastache in and around your garden. Remember that pesticide use will kill good insects, too!

Crop Rotation for the Home Garden

	Bed 1	Bed 2	Bed 3	Bed 4
Year 1	Legumes	Leafy	Fruits	ROOTS
Year 2	Leafy	Fruits	ROOTS	Legumes
Year 3	Fruits	ROOTS	Legumes	Leafy
Year 4	ROOTS	Legumes	Leafy	Fruits

I've learned from these mistakes and so many others, and I'll bet you can add to my list. We'll be more successful gardeners if we cooperate with the laws of nature, or at the very least, make a valiant effort not to oppose them!

Submitted by Alice Slusher

Resources:

[Vegetable Gardening](#)

[Soil testing](#)



HOW TO: Adding organic nitrogen to gardens

Chip Bubl, OSU Extension Faculty, Agriculture
[Country Living Newsletter, March 2023](#) Used with permission from author

The most common problem in home gardens is a shortage of nitrogen. This element is critical for plant growth. Without it, plants are stunted and don't develop the deep green color we associate with healthy crops.

Unfortunately, nitrogen is very soluble. After the 45" of rain we get from October through May, there is precious little N left in our gardens. That is very clear in winter/spring soil test results.

This means that all the nitrogen you will need for your garden must be applied in some form in the spring and summer.

There are inorganic and organic sources of nitrogen. Many gardeners prefer the organic sources. How do you figure how much you need?

The garden will require 3 to 4 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1000 square feet. To translate this into amounts of fertilizer applied, you have to learn to read the numbers on the bags.

Nutrients are listed as percentages of actual nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium (N-P-K), always in that order.

Blood meal is 12.5 - 1.5 - 0.6. From 100#s you would get twelve and one-half pounds of actual N, one and one-half pounds of P and six tenths of a pound of K.

To add 4 pounds of actual nitrogen from blood meal, you would need to apply about 35 pounds of blood meal per 1000 square feet.

Dried steer manure is about one-half percent actual nitrogen. Since one hundred pounds would give you one-half pound actual N, you would need 800#s of steer manure per 1000 square feet to give you four pounds of actual nitrogen.

Fresh manures vary considerably in nutrient content, but average 1% nitrogen.

If you add a lot of organic matter to the soil (generally a good idea on our clay based gardens), you must add some extra nitrogen (besides what you are adding for your vegetables) to help feed the bacteria and fungi that will break down the organic matter into humus. Failure to do so can create a nitrogen deficiency in your crop.

$2 \div .16 = 12.5 \text{ oz.}$

2 ounces Nitrogen

NPK
16-16-16
16% Nitrogen
FERTILIZER

12.5 ounces Fertilizer

Nitrogen amount recommended

(.16) of this bag of fertilizer is Nitrogen—the rest is filler and other nutrients.

Amount of fertilizer to use

How to Calculate Fertilizer Applications

Legume cover crops may provide enough N Mid-July forward as they break down, but nitrogen should be added in the spring to get your plants off to a good start.

If you had a good legume cover crop and worked it in, the spring application could be ~ 2 pounds of actual N per 1000 square feet. If you notice a nitrogen deficiency (pale, stunted corn), you can side dress some nitrogen containing fertilizer beside the plants and water it in. Done early enough, the plants may recover.



WINTER REPRIEVE

The summer is over,
the hard work is done.
No more digging, mowing, no
time in the sun.
Harvesting is ended and
everything is stored.
Tomatoes, potatoes, beans,
squash and gourds.
The garden is resting and so
are you.
It is all put away, nothing left
to do.
So we sit by the TV, watching
sports or shows, or
crocheting, knitting, cleaning,
mending clothes.
But the day soon reveals
we're thinking ahead of what
to plant in the next garden
bed. Which flowers, veggies,
shrubs and such.
Bird houses, bee boxes,
plants, not much.
While anticipating less rain,
snow and ice, tree blossoms
and sunshine will be nice.

After we sit down to eat the
Christmas dinner
of veggies, and fruit we'd
stored for the winter,
We read New Year's ads,
plan for tomorrow.
Double check our tools,
garden gloves,
wheelbarrows, gather
potting soil,
pots, lots of seeds.
We'll have new plants for
all our needs.
Soon winter will be
finished, all done.
But with planning, and
shopping begins summer
fun, We'll start all our
planting in the spring.
(We will have forgotten the
work it will bring)
But after the pros and cons
are weighed,
Having home grown crops,
are the best things made!



Birthday Party time: An Invitation!

Let's celebrate the Master Gardener Program's 50th Birthday!

RSVP: tatusweed@wsu.edu



WSU Extension Master Gardener Program

Cultivating plants, people, and communities since 1973

Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State (MGFWS)
P O Box 10533
Yakima, WA 98909

<https://mastergardenerfoundation.org>

Dear Colleagues,

You are invited to come to celebrate with us the 50th anniversary of the WSU Master Gardener Program. The program started at WSU in Pierce and King counties and is now the key volunteer program delivering real science to all communities throughout the United States and internationally. The WSU Puyallup Research and Extension Center was the faculty base that supported the content and trained early Master Gardeners. Faculty, administrators, and Master Gardener trainees played an integral part in making the program the success it is today.

We welcome your attendance as valued master gardener members at the April 8, 2023, speaking event from 1:00 to 2:15 pm at the Washington State University Puyallup Research and Extension Center's campus. A tour of the Puyallup Demonstration Garden and birthday party(!) will follow the formal program. Please RSVP to our guest coordinator, Tatum Weed, at tatusweed@wsu.edu by March 15, 2023, with your availability and the number of people in your party. Seating is limited, so please contact us soon.

Sincerely,

Tana L. Hasart, Ed.D.
Pierce County Master Gardener Foundation Board Member
President, Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.



Foundation Meeting Minutes February 14, 2023



Cowlitz County Master Gardener 2023 Foundation Board

