



# Master Gardener Newsletter



WSU EXTENSION  
Cowlitz County

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE GARDEN

Gary Fredricks

DECEMBER 2023  
304 COWLITZ WAY,  
KELSO, WA 98626

### Here to Help

By Gary Fredricks

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WSU Gardening Websites  
[mastergardener.wsu.edu/  
gardening.wsu.edu](http://mastergardener.wsu.edu/gardening.wsu.edu)  
[cowlitz.wsu.edu](http://cowlitz.wsu.edu)

HortSense Fact Sheets  
[hortsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu/](http://hortsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu/)

PestSense Fact Sheets  
[pestsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu/](http://pestsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu/)

WSU Educational Pubs  
<http://pubs.wsu.edu>

WSU Cowlitz Co. MGs  
[extension.wsu.edu/cowlitz/mg/](http://extension.wsu.edu/cowlitz/mg/)  
Master Gardener Founda-  
tion  
[www.cowlitzcomg.com/](http://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.*

***“If you have goals and procrastination, you have nothing. If you have goals and you take action, you can have anything you want.” ~ Thomas J. Vilord***

The last couple of years have brought tough times for our community. While some people have not been impacted, others have had their lives changed forever. Jobs have been lost, community service programs cut back, and for the public it seems it costs more to get less. It is such a big problem; you wonder how one person can make a difference?

One difference, people are seeking to connect back to the land. There was a time when gardens were everywhere, people canned food and communities were really in touch with the landscape around them. People connected with their food which helped them connect with other people. The younger generation now looks to fast food and the microwave to prepare meals. As people experience a faster pace of life, technology provides needed information. People became disconnected to the land around them.

Yet the past year showed an increase in people wanting to know more about growing their own food. They want to live a healthier life. People have learned that not all answers can come from a computer and want to talk to a live body. People are again reaching out to the WSU MGs to learn about their food. They want what each of you already knows.

I am getting more calls from people wanting WSU MGs to teach them about gardening. More WSU MG volunteers are getting invited to speak at programs about gardening. This is a time when the WSU MGs are being looked to for the answers. Don't forget the office is here to help you. If you need handouts, give us a call. Often resource material is available that has already been developed. The office is here to support you and make you successful. Don't forget you have a large group of volunteers ready to help with an event. All you need to do is contact them.

As the opportunity present itself, reach out to let others know the vast amount of information that WSU MG can offer. There is so much going on and it's just getting started. It is a wonderful time to be a WSU MG and I thank you all for your donation of talents and time to serve this community in a way that only you can.

# 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
- ◆ [MG Agreement Renewal](#)
- ◆ [What's In It For Me?](#) Jerry Winchell
- ◆ [Bundling Up Your Garden](#) Alice Slush
- ◆ [Caring for Holiday Plants](#) Alice Slusher
- ◆ [Tidbits](#) A. Slusher, C. Winchell, B. & S. Deak
- ◆ [2024 NWFGF](#)
- ◆ [Foundation Mtg. Minutes](#)

Log your Volunteer Hours



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

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## **- 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](mailto:alslush@gmail.com)  
**Articles for January issue due January 20, 2024**

# Meetings & Event

## **Foundation Meeting:**

**Jan. 9, 2024**

**10-11:30 am  
Training Center**



**MASTER  
GARDENER  
CALENDAR**

## **Upcoming Workshops :**

**Tuesday noon Zoom except where noted**

|                |  |   |
|----------------|--|---|
| Jan 16         | Caring For Fruit trees                                   | Alice Slusher                                 |
| Jan 23         | Pruning Fruit trees                                      | Gary Fredricks                                |
| Jan 30         | Planning Your Seed Starting Schedule                     | Sara Clark (Heidi Hubler)                     |
| Sat 3 10-12:30 | <b>LIVE Care of Fruit trees +</b><br>Pruning Fruit Trees | Alice Slusher<br>Gary Fredricks<br>Sara Clark |
| Feb 6          | Rose Care in the Spring                                  | Michele Thomas                                |

**Master Gardener  
Directory**

**On members' page of website**

# Foundation Announcements

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

Hoping everyone had a wonderful holiday and wishing everyone a safe and happy New Year. Here is to another trip around the sun that presents new successes and adventures for our Cowlitz County MG group in 2024.

I want to give many thanks to the following:

- Elected Officers: Dale Wheeler, Gail Wells and Jen Swanson
- Program Directors: Nancy Andrews, Sara Clark, Cheryl Coddington, Sue Fardell and Alice Slusher
- State Foundation Representatives: Patricia Bosh, Roxanne Nakamura and Marsha Tisdale
- Past President: Jerry Winchell
- Chairs: Phyllis Collins, Connie Haas, Tom Myklebust, Amy Norquist, Mardell Pettit, Wendy Santiago, Michele Thomas, and Carolyn Winchell
- Director/Coordinator: Gary Fredricks
- Administrative Assistant: Stephanie Bjerke
- All of the Foundation members and MG volunteers

Thank you for all the support and assistance provided to me as President in 2023 making this year another remarkable and record-breaking year in many aspects and through the achievements many accomplishments.

Some of our elected officers including myself are stepping down, Dale Wheeler and Gail Wells once again thank you for your support. Always, as someone steps down, we are very fortunate that others step up to fill the positions. Congratulations to our new 2024 Foundation Board officers President (Jerry Winchell), Vice President (Sue Fardell), Treasurer (Jen Swanson) and Secretary (Erin Chambers-Carey).

As everyone knows Willow and I have made the life-changing decision to move closer to family and unfortunately, my time will be very limited this year as a Cowlitz County Master Gardener Volunteer. My volunteer time now consists of deciding what gets packed, what goes away and packing!

Thanks for all you do!

Art Fuller  
Master Gardener Foundation of Cowlitz County, President



Box Mountain: Preparing for the Great Midwest Adventure!



# MG Agreement Renewal

So far, **55 Master Gardeners** have let Gary know that they wish to remain in the MG program in 2024. **Are you planning to join us for another exciting year?**

Every year all MGs must complete and submit this form to Gary to stay in the MG Program. This year, WSU is having us use GivePulse to do it. If you're already familiar with GivePulse, just click this link: <https://www.givepulse.com/survey/take/fqvPLuSENBE6cQc1YfJv>

But if GivePulse feels a bit tricky, don't worry! HELP IS HERE! As long as you remember your password and have access to your email, drop by our office on Wednesdays throughout December, and we'll assist you with the sign-up process. Or you can call Gary (360-577-3014) or Alice (330-518-8628)--we can even walk you through it on the phone!

Are you caught up [entering your volunteer hours on Give Pulse](#)? The organizations funding our program use reported hours to gauge our mission's dedication. Reporting your hours monthly ensures liability insurance for MG activities. **GARY NEEDS THIS INFORMATION BY THE END OF DECEMBER!**

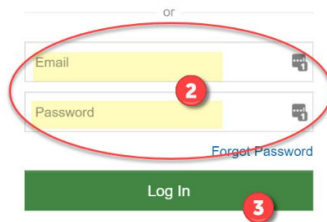
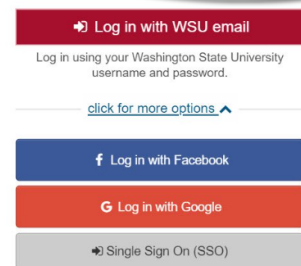
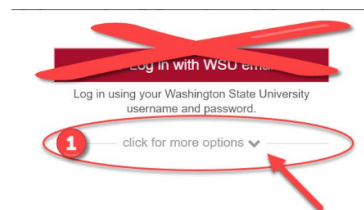
View GivePulse tutorials on our webpage: <https://www.cowlitzcomg.com/give-pulse>

Email, text, or call Alice for help with GivePulse: [alslush@gmail.com](mailto:alslush@gmail.com), 330-518-8628



## HOW TO LOG IN

YOU CANNOT LOG IN WITH "WSU EMAIL." USE THE "CLICK FOR MORE OPTIONS" SEE BELOW.



**Most problems with login are right here. Choose "click for more options" and log in with your email and password.**

Don't have an account? [Sign Up](#)





# MGs Reporting: What's in it for Me?

## What's in it for ME? Hold the Vision

Jerry Winchell

There is a deep psychological concept that drives our behavior. It's called WIIFM (What's in it for me?) When I talk to Master Gardeners about why they joined us they almost invariably say:

- A. Fun
- B. Friendship
- C. Sharing gardening

What if we give them instead:

- 1. Fundraising
- 2. Rules
- 3. Conflict

According to "WIIFM" that doesn't work.

SOOO can we do our own needed functions? YES—IF. If our primary needs are met then rules and fundraising...are a means to our desires. But...if committees and conflict and grunt-work become all it's about then—not good!

We must hold the Vision:

The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing. (Steven Covey in Seven Habits of Highly Effective People)

What is "the main thing?" It's RELATIONSHIPS.

People having fun sharing with people.

It isn't hard—it's just live-or-die critical.

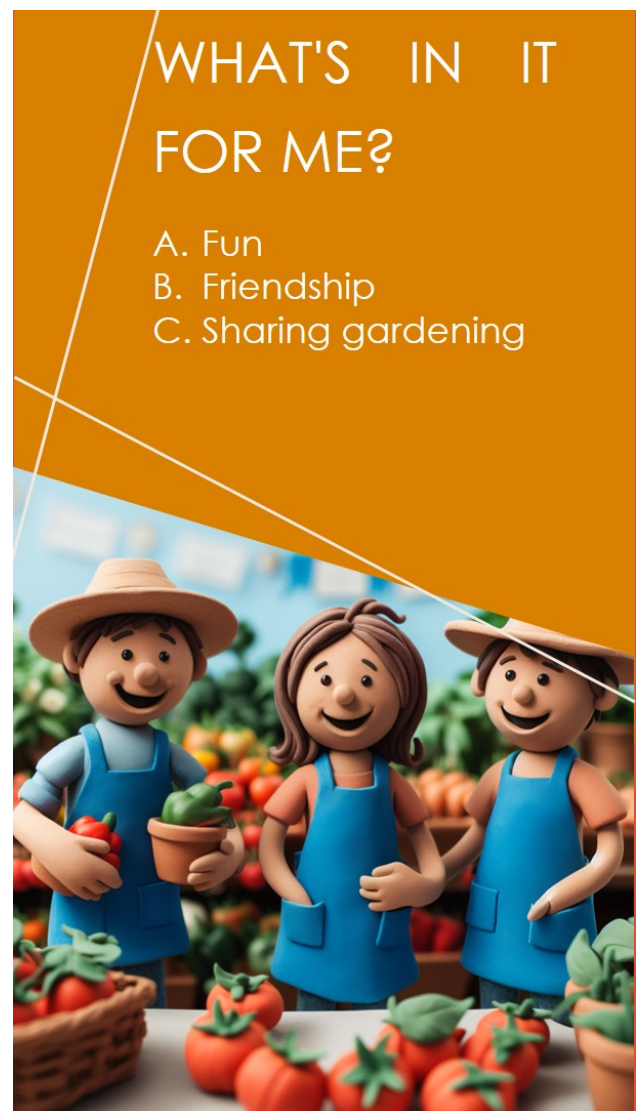
My son Matthew and I used to have fun in our ship and we decided to build a rocket. We studied—spent hours on a computer simulator, designed, bonded, sanded, polished...(You couldn't pay me enough to do all that). BUT we were bouncing ideas off each other and building a rocket. Finally, the day came when we filed a flight plan with the FAA (...time of launch, coordinates, estimated elevation...) 3 – 2 – 1 FIRE!

Within a second it flashed out of sight. We computer tracked it to 13,168 feet for a new( I class engine) national amateur record.

Today what makes my eyes mist over just thinking about it? Was it all the bloody sanding, paperwork, and glue fumes? No==it was the time we spent together building a relationship—and I miss that today.

It's a new year—a new start. Let's build some awesome relationships this year. Who knows what we can accomplish together—having fun and sharing.

Now, THAT's WIIFM.



# MGs Reporting: Bundling Up Your Garden

## **Bundling Up Your Garden: A Guide to Winter Care for Container Plants**

**Alice Slusher**

Having relocated from the Midwest to the Pacific Northwest 12 years ago, I was genuinely astonished to see folks cultivating perennials, shrubs, and trees in pots, confidently letting them brave the winter elements outdoors. I learned that not all plants and containers are created equal—choose carefully! Making sure your outdoor potted plants stay happy and healthy during our cold, rainy winters can be challenging. I learned a few things along the way through trial and error (if you're not making mistakes, you aren't really gardening!). Here are some tips to help keep your container garden thriving all season long!

Do your homework first—Be sure to select those known to be cold-hardy in the PNW region. This includes evergreen shrubs like heathers, dwarf conifers, hellebores, and winter-flowering plants like pansies and winter-blooming heathers.

Using the correct container is a must. Plastic, metal, or fiberglass pots are good choices. I learned the hard way that terra cotta pots can crack wide open when exposed to a hard frost!

Protect the roots from those occasional polar vortex temps by insulating the containers. Use pot feet, risers, or even a couple of 2x4s to lift your containers off the ground slightly. This helps prevent the pots from sitting in freezing water and promotes better drainage. Additionally, place a layer of mulch or insulating material like straw or leaves on top of the soil in the containers to protect the plant roots from extreme cold. If you are trying to protect marginally tender plants like some of the Hebes, place the pot in a larger container and fill in straw, leaves, or several layers of bubble wrap around the pot. This also works well if you live at higher elevations.

Another strategy is to cluster your containers close together. This creates a microclimate that can help protect the plants from extreme cold and wind. This works especially well if you can move them to a sheltered location, such as against a south-facing wall or under the eaves of your house. This can provide some protection from the elements and reduce exposure to freezing temperatures and heavy rain-fall. Be mindful that if your plants are under the

eaves, they may not get enough water—hard to believe. Still, I lost a beautiful Lemon Cypress because it didn't get enough winter rain. Monitor them, and if they need water—if it's dry about an inch below the surface--water them in the morning.

On those single-digit or teen-temp nights, cover your containers with frost cloth, burlap, or blankets to shield them from the extreme cold. Remove the covers during the day to allow the plants to receive light and air. Luckily, we only have a few nights like that at lower elevations.

Remove any dead or damaged growth from your container plants to encourage healthy growth in the spring. This will also help to minimize the chance of overwintering fungal diseases on the remaining leaves. Deadhead spent flowers to promote continuous blooming when warmer weather returns.

Throughout winter, it's crucial to keep a watchful eye on your potted plants for signs of unwelcome guests like pests and diseases. Even in cold conditions, aphids have an impressive ability to withstand the cold. Scale insects may also make an appearance during the winter months. There are also a couple of fungal diseases that can potentially affect your container plants. You can stay ahead of these issues by promptly plucking off withered leaves and removing damaged branches. Also, make sure your pots have proper drainage. If any problems pop up, quickly addressing them is critical to keep them from spreading.

By following these tips, you'll be on the right track to keep your outdoor potted plants thriving through the Pacific Northwest winter. Proper care and attention will reward you with vibrant and healthy plants when spring arrives.



# MGs Reporting: Caring for Holiday Plants

By: Alice Slusher

If you're like me, you've likely embraced the holiday spirit by either gifting plants or receiving beautiful living gifts of amaryllis, fragrant paperwhite narcissus, poinsettias, or rosemary. Right now, I have eight amaryllis bulbs in various stages of leafing out and blooming, as well as a couple of poinsettia plants. I found some narcissus bulbs on sale, too, so I will be adding those to my indoor garden.

Once the holidays are over and the blooms start waning, too many people discard their winter greenery. By giving your winter garden some attention, you can extend your enjoyment of it until spring arrives in Cowlitz County!

**Poinsettias** will remain attractive for a couple of months by moving them near a window with indirect light and keeping the soil moist but not wet. Getting them to rebloom is possible, but it's a lengthy and fiddly process. I did it once, but now I get new ones each year. Too much work! Discard them when they start to look spindly.

**Paperwhite narcissus**, unfortunately, expend all their energy in the fragrant forced blooms we love, and even with the best care, it can take several years for them to bloom again. It's best to treat them as annuals and toss them in the compost pile when they are finished blooming.

**Rosemary** does well in bright indoor light, but don't over-water—wait until the top inch of soil is dry. Pruning the plant will make it bushier, so it will look great in a pot on your deck or in the garden in spring. Rosemary is classified as USDA hardiness zone 8. Because Cowlitz County is zone 8B (average extreme winter temps between 15° to 20°), it should do well outdoors in win-

ter. Planting it in well-drained soil is important—it won't tolerate wet feet!

**Norfolk pines**, those lovely "Christmas trees," are tough, hardy indoor plants. They thrive in cool indoor spots with bright indirect sunlight, but avoid placing them near heaters or fireplaces as it can cause them to dry out. The roots won't tolerate overly wet soil, so allow them to dry out between waterings and then water thoroughly. Norfolk pines are designated Zones 10-11 and need much warmer winters than we have. With the proper attention and care, this graceful plant will bring a touch of winter greenery to your indoor space for many years.



**Amaryllises** are the most satisfying holiday plants because they are easy to care for and rebloom. We moved to Cowlitz County 12 years ago and brought my dad's bright red amaryllis with us. It bloomed every Christmas for several years in his memory. It got misplaced in one of our moves, but I loved revisiting it each year.





# MGs Reporting: Caring for Holiday Plants

After the amaryllis finishes blooming, remove only the flowers and place it in a well-lit indoor spot by a south-facing window. Water, keeping the soil moist, and fertilize monthly with a liquid indoor plant fertilizer. The leaves and stalks are the bulb's solar panels, collecting energy for the next blooms. Only trim the stalk and leaves once they've turned yellow.

After the last chance of frost in May:

1. Take the amaryllis outdoors to a sheltered area with filtered sunlight.
2. Gradually move it to a location with at least 6 hours of morning sun.
3. Keep up with regular watering and fertilizing.
4. In the fall, bring the amaryllis back indoors before the first frost.

To trigger reblooming:

1. Store the bulb in a cool, dark place with temperatures between 45 to 55° F for eight to twelve weeks.
2. Don't water it during this time, but remove any yellowing leaves.
3. Check the bulb occasionally.
4. When it has completed its dormant phase, or if you notice it has started to grow, repot it in a slightly larger pot in good quality indoor potting soil with the top one-third of the bulb above the soil line.
5. Relocate it to a sunny window and water it, keeping the soil uniformly moist but not soggy. The bulb will only need a little water until you see its little green leaves appear.
6. That's the time to start regular watering and fertilizing. Your bulb should begin flowering in 4-6 weeks for a stunning holiday rebloom!



Waxed amaryllis bulbs

What about those cool **“waxed amaryllis” bulbs** that are coated in wax so you don't have to do anything with them except give them bright light? When they are finished blooming, simply break and peel off the wax, and plant it like you would a regular amaryllis. It will grow roots and gather energy, too, for next year.

**If you don't want to bother reblooming your amaryllis**, you may drop it off at the extension office. We're planning an amaryllis workshop next December.





# MGs Reporting: Tidbits

## Winter Brassica Harvest By: Alice Slusher

My first time growing a cool-weather crop!

Planted in early September from tiny transplants, harvested December 15.

[Purple Moon Cauliflower](#)  
and [Clementine Cauliflower](#).

I should have followed the instructions for spacing: "Sow 3–4 seeds 18" apart, 1/2" deep, rows 24–36" apart."

Mine were too close together—the ones in the back row were shaded by those in the front and didn't do well.



December 15 Harvest



## By: Carolyn Winchell

I'm contemplating using arborist wood chips to make a tiny start on a meadow--inspired by Jen Swanson and the beautiful pictures in the *Fine Gardening Magazines* that some lovely people have shared.





# MGs Reporting: 2024 NWFGF

## 2024 Northwest Flower and Garden Festival

Cowlitz County Master Gardeners made a debut at the popular Northwest Flower and Garden Festival in February 2023, and the results were nothing short of spectacular ([see photos for proof](#))! Gary Scheider from King County will once again take the lead, orchestrating the WSU Extension Master Gardener presence at the 2024 festival.

Last year, our shared booth, which featured Master Gardeners from across the state, engaged with a whopping 3,100 festival-goers. Jen Swanson, a representative from Cowlitz County, enthusiastically reported that they managed to strike up conversations with nearly every passerby. Surprisingly, some visitors were completely unaware of WSU Extension or the Master Gardener program, while others expressed keen interest in joining MG Training. It was a golden opportunity to spread the word about our program and its mission.

In 2024, the established King County Clinic booth will merge with our state Master Gardener booth, and we've secured an even better spot—a prime corner location on the way to the lecture area. This upgraded booth will offer more space, allowing for expanded plant clinic activity. The costs for this year's booth and materials are estimated to be around \$9,000, and we're thrilled to share that the Cowlitz County Foundation has generously contributed \$400 towards this endeavor. We will be informed about the selection process for our county's representatives (stay tuned for updates). We have been assured that scheduling will allow for carpooling arrangements to the festival.

Mark your calendars: the festival is set to take place from February 14-18 at the Seattle Convention Center —[check it out](#). It's an event brimming with exciting opportunities to see and learn new things. We encourage you to consider volunteering to help spread the gardening gospel at our booth; we'll provide more details as they become available. Don't miss out on this chance to be part of something truly special!



**Meeting Minutes for Annual Planning Meeting November 17, 2023  
Available in January issue**

Annual Planning Meeting November 17, 2023  
Meeting slide deck and recording are available on our website



**Cowlitz County Master Gardener 2023 Foundation Board**

