



The Common Sense Gardener

WSU Thurston County Master Gardener Newsletter

Volume 6

Issue 2

April 2006

Plant Sale News by Lynda Bauer and Evelyn Stewart

Kick-Off was a great success on March 4th. Over 40 Master Gardeners came to learn the routine for potting, inventory and plant care. We had sunny skies fortunately because our trusty canopy split down the middle after two years faithful service sheltering our potting crews. Eight folks stayed on to work and potted over 200 new plants for our Spring Sale on May 20th. And.....



the lucky winner of the drop-dead gorgeous purple LOJO Leaf was a happy **Karen Walters!**

We're well on our way to a smashing successful plant sale this year, and we'd like to let you know of some of the new features that are being introduced this spring!

New for 2006:

- ☼ **A RAFFLE** - Judy Wilson has donated a copper work of art for the garden as our main prize; your Foundation Board has donated a beautiful coffee-table book. Do you have a quality garden-related item (or maybe not) to donate? The more prizes, the more potential for ticket sales! Contact: Frankie Rasmusson or Lynda Bauer
- ☼ **COMMUNITY INFORMATION TABLES** - Various gardening associations will staff or display information in the Children's Garden area.
- ☼ **VENDORS** - Pat's Novelties, Earthworm Farm, Master Gardeners Judy Wilson, LOJO, and Connie Barclay
- ☼ **FOOD BOOTH** - MGFTC Board will staff pre-packaged food and drink booth for the public.
- ☼ **A NEW MARKETING DIRECTOR** - Deborah Welt, the new Board Director of Marketing, is handling all our publicity this year – please give her as much support as you can because

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MG Contact Information

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Next Month's Feature:



Please address any comments to Ernie Paul, Program Manager

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the more folks hear about our sales the more sales we will make! Tell your friends and neighbors to tell their friends and neighbors and let's get a **REALLY BIG** crowd out.

So, do those things get your juices flowing with anticipation of what's going to be spicing up the sale this year? We hope so, and also hope that it encourages you to come out and join in the fun with potting, plant care and all the chatter at the tables about our home gardens and new plant additions! Everyone is requested to donate at least one day (and hopefully more). Our plants will love you for it! And their health and well-groomed appearance will **SHOUT** to every potential buyer on May 20th **"Hey, take me home with you!"**.

Slugs have already been sighted, so **Plant Police** are on active duty removing critters and weeds, and administering TLC to rows of plants. Please remember to bring your own tools, a pad or seat for cushioning, a snack if desired and weather-appropriate clothing. We will provide water at breaks and there is always the chance to learn more and talk with other MGs!

Here's a list of some of the jobs available, and timing.

Our regular Plant Care routine occurs Tuesday and Saturday from 9 am – 1 pm.

April:

Plant Care continues. Please help!

Volunteer Sign-up for Sale Day Jobs

- Site Maintenance**
- Kay Lloy needs help to get the tables and props ready!
 - Our outdoor sandwich boards need re-vamping!!
 - Our donated shed will be erected.



**EMPTY POTS
NEEDED!!
(1 gallon minimum,
please)
Especially larger
ones, including
tree size!**

May:

Plant Care continues. Please help!

- Sale Day Training**
- Master Gardeners will prepare us to be knowledgeable sales folk!
 - Every job will be explained for newcomers and veterans (don't miss out on the new procedures!)

- Lay-Out & Set Up**
- Bob Findlay will lead volunteers in re-grouping our plants for a SUPER SALE DISPLAY.
 - Lois & Joyce will head up our Vendor Sites set-up, AND our new Associations Information / Education Site.
 - Kay Lloy and crew will be ready with those tables and props!
 - Bill Longnecker and Sharon Brown will support our Cashiers.

Shelving is needed for the new shed being erected in the Plant Sale area behind DirtWorks. Contact Lynda Bauer 455-9236 if you have some to donate.

The Plant Sale Committee meets monthly and anyone with comments, ideas, questions, or interest in participating is most welcome to join us.

Next meeting: April 12th, 10 am in the Lacey Office

After listening to speakers at the Seattle Plant Show, perusing catalogs, and reading about all the wonderful new plants (and some old standbys), we all got enthused and excited about having some of these beauties for our annual plant sales. Our "wish list" follows!

We are grateful for the donations already received for the sale of roses, grasses, climbing hydrangeas, and pledges for all our vegetable starts listed in the last Program Newsletter. Also donated were apple trees, and a Japanese Maple (which will be planted in the garden in the newly designed mixed border).

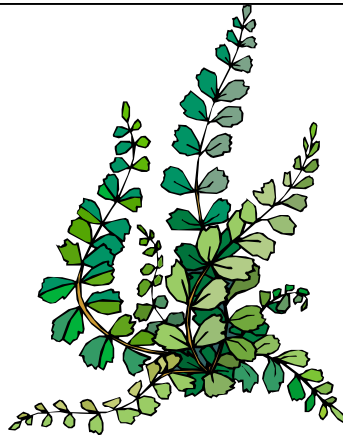
Of course, if you seasoned gardeners have other choice plants (not mentioned below) we hope you'll want to share.....☺

Plant Sale

And Now, The Most Wanted Plant List!

Special Plants:

Agapanthus 'Storm Cloud'
Bergenia 'Cabernet'
Cimicifuga 'Hillside Black Beauty' (new name *Actaea simplex*)
Brunnera 'Jack Frost'
Heuchera 'Obsidian'
Fatsia 'Spiderweb'
Phormium 'Sundowner', 'Jester'
Persicaria 'Lance Corporal'; 'Red Dragon'
Sambucus 'Black Lace', 'Thundercloud'
Rosa chinensis 'Mutabilis'
Hakonechloa 'All Gold', 'Beni Kaze'
Eryngium (sea holly), also variegated type
 Fern: *Asplenium* (very wavy fronds)



Annuals:

Coleus 'Antique Orange' (also other colorful varieties)
Geranium
 Purple Fountain Grass
Salvia (black and blue)
 Mexican Sage
 Silver *Helichrysum*

New Varieties of Old Favorites:

Polemonium (Jacobs Ladder), variegated 'Brise D'anjou'
Plumbago
Euphorbia 'Sticks on Fire', 'Garblesham Enchanter'
Geum (yellow and red)
Hebe 'James Stirling'
Agastache
 Shasta Daisy 'Ice Star'
Coreopsis 'Tequila Sunrise', 'Baby Sun'
 Stokes Aster 'Blue Danube'
Thalictrum 'Black Stockings'
Tiarella 'Candy Striper'
Filipendula, variegated
 Poppy, 'Patty's Plum', 'Queen Victoria'
Echinacea (coneflower), *purpurea* 'Magnus', 'White Swan', 'Harvest Moon', 'Orange Meadowbrite'

Native Plant List

Oregon Grape, tall & low varieties
 Salal
 Kinnickinnick
 Evergreen & Red Huckleberry
 Black Twinberry
 Indian Plum (Osoberry)
 Snowberry
 Serviceberry
 Bog Rosemary
Spiraea douglasii (Western Spiraea)
 Salmonberry
 Pacific rhododendron
 Vine Maple
 Sword Fern
 Lady Fern
 Yellow Wood Violet
 False Solomon's Seal
 Hooker's Fairybells
 Foamflower
 Piggyback plant
 Fringe cup (*Tellima grandiflora*)
Vancouveria
 Pacific Bleeding Heart
 Wild Ginger
 Bunchberry

Coreopsis
 'Tequila
 Sunrise'



Welcome Ernie Paul! by Cliff Moore

I know it is spring. I know because the birds are waking me up every morning now, and that is a much sweeter sound than my alarm clock! And I know it is spring because the Master Gardener e-mail traffic is really picking up. Activity in the gardens is underway, plans are being made and implemented, the number of visitors to the clinic in the office is increasing and just in time, Ernie Paul joined us as our Master Gardener Program Manager in a temporary half-time position.

The temporary period with Ernie will only last until the end of April, but this will get us through the current training class and launched into the more intense period of spring work in the gardens. I am so grateful to Ernie for jumping in and taking on so much in a time when I really needed that help.

I have really enjoyed being more closely involved with the program since Keith departed. I have learned so much and have been able to get to know so many interesting MG volunteers. I appreciate the way you have all welcomed me into the fold.

We had originally thought the temporary person might be with us all the way to the end of the year, but now we are recalibrating our thinking. As an administrator, I always view an open position as an opportunity to reflect on current needs and realities. I like to do position and program reviews when we have an open position and several volunteers have also suggested this to me as a good idea. While I had planned to do this project later in the year, I now think we should do this sooner. So, I will be pulling together a group of volunteers to look at issues such as the position description, the program direction, volunteer staffing needs, opportunities for community connections and partnerships. If you would like to be a part of this review team, please let me know. Just looking at the calendar, I am guessing that I really won't be able to undertake this process until mid-May. This means that after Ernie departs on April 30, I will be back in the MG day to day program role until we collectively decide how best to move forward.

Through April, as a general rule, Ernie will work with us Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8 to noon and all day Friday. Ernie will be available for evening and weekend duty, but when he participates in an evening meeting, he will come in a little later the following day. If you want to invite Ernie to an evening or weekend event or meeting, please give him as much advance notice as possible.

And how do you contact Ernie? His phone number will be: 786-5445, extension 7910 and his email is: paule@co.thurston.wa.us

Please join me in welcoming Ernie.



Hold the date - 11th Annual Garden Rhapsodies Tour! Saturday, July 29 2006

This year's Garden Rhapsodies Tour will be held Saturday, July 29 from 10 am through 4 pm. This annual garden tour features lovely local gardens that are maintained in an earth-friendly manner. The tour provides an opportunity to pick up tips from experienced gardeners, visit with friends, listen to live music, and see artists in action. Tickets will be available in July at many local nurseries, or through the mail by contacting Jennifer Johnson at 360-754-4111, TDD 360-754-2933. Don't miss it!

I know that Garden Rhapsodies may seem like a distant event to some of you, but to those of us on the committee it is just around the corner. We are hard at work to make this year's tour the talk of

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the town, and are currently putting together the assorted demonstrations for each of the gardens; we know the master gardeners to be a talented group and first wanted to ask if any of you have talents you wish to share as demonstrators. The demonstration needs to relate to gardening, and that is a very broad field, so be creative. Some ideas already bounced around would be tool sharpening, pruning, composting, mason bee keeping, container gardening, flower arranging, flower drying or preserving, edible gardens, kitchen herb gardening, garden arranging, or scrap booking, the list goes on and on. How about an informational display about our gardens, clinics, classes, foundation and opportunities for community service? Many of these demonstrations could be right out of our curriculum, as a way of enticing new members.

If you would like to be a demonstrator, or have an idea for a demonstration please send an email to: shannawinters1@comcast.net. Be sure to include any contact information if you have someone in mind. I would like to have the demonstrations lined up in April, so put on those thinking caps!

Sponsors include Thurston County, WSU Cooperative Extension Native Plant Salvage Project, Thurston County Master Gardeners, Olympia Symphony Guild, and City of Olympia.

DirtWorks Children's Garden News by Karen Walters

School will not be out until the third week of June, so the Children's Garden will officially open on June 27. We have a fun and more organized schedule planned for this summer (Experience is a wonderful thing!). We will have a training session soon for those interested in working in the Children's Garden on Tuesdays this summer.

In March we worked on cleaning up the garden and getting it ready to look good for spring time. So far we have deadheaded, pruned, divided and fed the plants with Dirt Works compost. Our next project is to get the vegetable beds ready for planting.

On April 7th, 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM, 32 home-schooled kids will meet with Master Gardeners at the Extension office and learn how to plan the vegetable beds at the garden. Then they will later join us for planting the vegetable beds. We also hope our scouts and 4-H groups will return to learn more about gardening.

Linda Bennett and I have continued to work with the children at Evergreen Village on the third Thursday of each month. These kids are a delight to work with. During the winter we took our garden games and did craft projects based on garden subjects, such as pollination and bees. In March we decorated containers and planted herbs for the kids to grow in their homes.

We have been asked to join a project at Lydia Hawk Elementary School. They received a grant to start a garden project. GRUB will be putting in 12 raised beds with good soil. The goal is to teach better nutrition through growing your own vegetables. They will even have a green house for vegetable starts. Master Gardeners have been asked to help teach the children how to plant and care for their garden. This will probably require giving some summer support as well. Zena Edwards of the Extension Office will be handling the nutrition component. We have three Master Gardeners who have interest in helping with this, but we could use more help.

If you are able to help with any of the above projects, please contact Karen Walters at kswalters@comcast.net or 456-3506.



We began working at Dirt Works on Saturday March 4th. After enjoying a tour and 'how to' session in the plant sale area, workers were given a briefing of "How things work at Dirt Works". It was great to be able to welcome several new members of the 2006 class. Then the Master Gardeners got busy digging up and dividing blueberries and doing some redesign and planting in the berry area. We have put in some new thornless trailing blackberries and will soon build supports for these and the raspberries. The area is now more open for walking in and picking the berries. If anyone has some ever bearing strawberries they would like to donate, it would be appreciated. Our bed is empty!



As you all now know, the City of Olympia approved money for the renovation taking place. We are waiting for this money to be released, and then we will start with the major part of our renovation. We are hoping to begin excavating in April, and getting the five foot pathways in and the soil into the mixed border. Keith will be using his tractor, and it should go pretty quickly. It is hoped we will be this far along by the plant sale. Won't it be nice to have a beginning to show the public as they come through, and to have decent pathways to walk on! After all, folks have seen our 'Under Renovation' signs for two years.

The mixed border committee is almost finished planning what plants we need to acquire for the border. The 3D model that Bob built was inspiring, and the current plant list looks interesting. Now we don't have a large budget for plants, so if you wish to donate money or a plant, we would certainly accept your generosity. We already have someone intending to donate 200 dollars for a large plant or tree, and are receiving the donation of a Japanese Maple. We will later put out a list of plants we still need just in case you are dividing plants or wish to donate.

Now it sounds like we just work, work, work and have no fun. So this year we are planning some garden tours and outings for Dirt Works volunteers to join in on. We are also going to try for a little social time at the Gazebo during breaks. This is being organized by Mary Snyder for Tuesdays, and Saturday folks are welcome to find a volunteer to organize this if you desire. We will have two pot lucks (at least) which will be held in the evenings at Dirt Works. Pot lucks have always been held on Tuesdays at noon, but we would like to have more participation from Thursday evening and Saturday volunteers. We realize it is too hard to come on a lunch hour. (You won't want to miss these pot lucks. The food is always plentiful and very, very good!)

If you have strawberries, or wish to donate to the new mixed border, contact me at kswalters@comcast.net or 456-3506. Any cash donations will go through the Treasurer of the Foundation Board, Sharon Brown. It must be specifically marked as a donation to the mixed border at Dirt Works.



The Listserv is up and running. In order to improve the service, it has been changed so that replies are sent only to the sender, not everyone. If you have information that is of interest to everyone, you can send a message to wsutcmg@lyris.cahnrs.wsu.edu

Please use the service judiciously, and only for Master Gardener related topics.

It's important that you send all e-mail changes back to Mary in the Lacey office so that the database can remain current. That address is LewisM@co.thurston.wa.us

Closed Loop Garden Park by Tam Crocker

It is bloom time for some plants in the garden. They seem to defy the cool weather and bring us joy and hope that real spring weather is just around the corner. *Viburnum bodnantense* 'Charles Lamont', a trial plant gifted to us from Gossler Nursery in Oregon, is in full bloom along with cousins 'Dawn', 'Pink Dawn' and 'Deben'. These plants bloom sporadically during the winter and early spring. Charles Lamont is blooming all along the stems with light pink clusters, and is putting on quite a show. These are great plants for winter bloom and most are fragrant.



Viburnum bodnantense
'Charles Lamont' at CLP

Soon you will be able to have lunch in the garden, as the long hoped for picnic tables have arrived. Made of recycled material from a Washington company, these tables are a gift from the county. Look for them in the Picnic area near the Peony bed and the upper hedgerow.

For the past two years we have enjoyed five copper trellis Judy Wilson made. They were used to hold up the Sambucus, and adorn the compost area, and the raised bed. An unwelcome visitor took two; cutting the Sambucus to remove one. It becomes apparent that copper is not a good material for a public garden. Eventually they will be replaced with trellis made of a different material. We will miss this work of Judy's, as it was definitely part of the garden.

Beginning in April, we will work on Fridays as well as Saturdays, 9AM to 1PM both days. Come when you can for as long as you can. Every bit of effort makes this garden work. Bring something to drink and dress in layers. We have tools or you can use your own. We look forward to the fellowship of working together.

Master Gardeners at the Olympia Farmers Market by Bob Findlay

There are two-inch snowflakes falling as I write about our Spring opening of the garden and clinic on Thursday, April 6. Preparations are underway for the season with a successful clean-up day in February when we pruned the willows, dogwoods, and grasses around the retention pond. Thanks to the several regulars and new interns who helped that day. We were rained out the week before but those who appeared gathered at the Dancing Goats for a planning meeting that centered on budgeted projects and clinic improvements slated for this year. A second clean-up day was held on Saturday, March 18 to complete the cut-back of perennials, augment the garden soil in the beds, and get a head start on weeding.

Sandy Atkinson has agreed to be clinic lead starting this year. As a regular Saturday volunteer for some years, she is knowledgeable about the problems and potentials of this much-visited

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clinic. She has also introduced MG interns to the clinic operation. The clinic building will get a clean-out and at least a new ceiling, a new awning with WSU MG Clinic painted on, re-sorted and updated references - ideally many on CDs, and we may finally get on the Internet if wireless connections reach that far - Lisa Randlette is investigating. A replacement trellis will be installed just outside the clinic door, and Dorothy Taylor is coordinating the rehabilitation of the shade bed along the east side of the building.

Perhaps the most important goal for the clinic this year is to be open during all market hours, 10am-3pm Thursdays through Sundays during the spring through fall. We welcome the return of past clinic volunteers who will be paired with the new class of interns. Check your calendars and respond to Sandy at jamsack2@yahoo.com to get on the roster. As most of you know, with the nature of the garden-clinic-market relationship, we mix garden and clinic duties as visitors ask gardeners about their activity and clinic volunteers can't resist tending the display beds. These informal encounters with visitors are valuable learning opportunities and are central to our mission at the OFM.

During the garden season, we would like to continue our inventory and labeling project, begin some serious plant health research, and continue our on-going conversations about future developments in the garden and clinic. So join us at the OFM, where the food and live music add to the enjoyment of gardening.

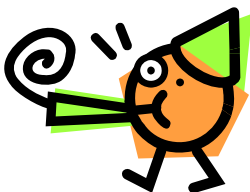


Working on the OFM Garden

Celebrate Spring with MG Graduates by Connie Roth

Mark your calendars for an April 7th celebration welcoming the 2006 class of Master Gardeners! The festivities, hosted by The Master Gardener Foundation of Thurston County, will mark successful completion of the classroom portion of the program and will be held at the Hawks Prairie Campus of South Sound Community College starting at 10 a.m. We will also be welcoming our (temporary) Master Gardener Program Manager, Ernie Paul, at the event.

Bring your favorite entrée, salad or dessert to share at a noon potluck. Activities will include an introduction to the Foundation, awarding of certificates to the new graduates, the potluck, clothing, worm bin and book sales, and a special program: **"Getting in Shape for Gardening" with Pam Hoffman** who is a Grays Harbor Master Gardener. Pam holds Bachelor and Masters degrees in Sports Medicine and teaches Sports Medicine for Active Adults as well as Preventing Falls for Older Adults. Her talk will include active audience participation and focuses not only on getting fit but also common garden injuries and how to prevent them, how to treat them if you ignored the prevention portion, and how to keep gardening for a lifetime.



All Master Gardeners and Master Composters are invited. We hope to see you there!



Foundation President's Column by Mary Moore

As many of you have probably heard through our reliable grape vine, the Foundation will no longer be selling gardening books. It was a good try, but there were numbers that worked against us. We do not have the ability to sell to a large enough group of people, unlike Pierce County or Spokane County, to make the kind of profits that we need to for the effort that we put into it. We do not have a large enough budget to be able to afford the kind of inventory that we need if we are going to sell to other counties besides our own. We can not afford to maintain books that remain unsold for any length of time. And finally, we have too much competition from places like Amazon and Costco that can afford to sell gardening books a good deal more cheaply than we can.

What we can do is to have regular book reviews in our newsletter from now on. For instance, Noel Kingsbury has written a book entitled "Gardens By Design" which includes expert advice from such gardening pundits as Beth Chatto, Piet Oudolf, James Van Sweden, and Julie Moys Messervy. Published last Spring, this book is available from Timber Press or from Amazon.

What we also need to do is some solid brainstorming on fund-raising. What can we do that will raise the maximum amount of funding with a minimum of effort and/or upfront cash? The Foundation Board doesn't have the time to work on this at this point because it is too busy keeping the ship on a solid course. So, we need help. Who would like to join a task force for the purpose of coming up with some solid fund-raising proposals for the Board's consideration? If you are interested, please contact me at mymtrain@comcast.com. I would like to appoint that Task Force in the near future after the Board has come up with some realistic criteria with which to use as a guide to the Task Force. I look forward to your comments and your commitment!



Master Gardener Foundation Board Members

President.....Mary Moore
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Ask the Expert by Don Tapio (Edited for space - for complete articles contact Don at tapiod@wsu.edu)

Question: Even if it is the official shamrock plant in Ireland, we still don't like having white clover in our lawn. Is there a simple way of getting rid of it? (from week of March 13)

Answer: You could try digging it out, and that would be effective provided you get all of the roots and then reseed with a turf grass mix. Another option would be to spray it with an herbicide. WSU Extension Weed Scientists recommend using weed killers containing either Dicamba or triclopyr. When used according to labeled directions, either one will effectively eliminate clover. Wait until the clover is actively growing before spraying the foliage.

Question: We are getting conflicting information about planting new trees and shrubs. Some garden books recommend that root balls on balled and burlapped plants not be disturbed while others suggest removing the burlap and as much soil as possible. What do you recommend? (from week of March 20)

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Answer: When planting plants with large root balls remove all strings and twine to eliminate the possibility of girdling the roots or stems. This includes natural materials such as binder twine and hay rope. Cut and fold natural burlap away from the root ball into the planting hole before backfilling. Synthetic materials used for wrapping the root ball must be cut away and discarded after the plant is situated in the planting hole and before backfilling. Backfill using native soil and water the plant immediately after planting.

Question: We have recently purchased a new home and want to begin landscaping it this Spring. Is there a list of recommended plants we can choose from? We will need a combination of trees, shrubs and a few perennials. (from week of March 6)

Answer: A good place to start is by checking out the Great Plant Picks website at <http://www.greatplantpicks.org/> This site currently lists 376 ornamental plants that have been chosen as outstanding plants for gardens throughout the Pacific Northwest. The list is based on the combined expertise of over 40 horticulturists from Washington, Oregon and British Columbia.

Now in its 6th year, the Great Plant Picks program has an easy-reference list of all the Great Plant Picks chosen to date. Next to each entry is the plant's common name, form, light requirement, height and width. Drought tolerance and outstanding qualities are also noted. Fact sheets for each plant provide detailed cultural information and suggested plant combinations.

Question: We want to purchase some tree seedlings and are confused as to what the descriptive numbers 2-0 mean. (from week of March 6)

Answer: Most tree seedlings are designated by a two digit age code. The first digit indicates the number of years the tree grew in the nursery bed where the seed was sown. The second digit indicates how many years the seedling has grown after being moved to a transplant bed where it had more space to develop to a larger size. Size 2-0 seedlings are commonly used in many planting situations including reforestation projects. Larger transplant seedlings (1-1 or 2-1) are often used when competition from brush or animal damage might be problems.

For a list of tree nurseries in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana where you can purchase a large variety of tree seedlings call the WSU Publications office at 1-800-723-1763 and ask for EB 0790 titled Forest Tree Nurseries in Washington and Adjacent States. You may also order a copy online at: <http://pubs.WSU.edu/> Cost is \$1.00

Question: We are curious as to if the cold weather we had in mid-February will help to reduce the insect pests in our garden this year. (from week of February 27)

Answer: According to WSU entomologists, insects and other arthropods from tropical regions simply die when exposed to low temperatures; they have no physiological mechanisms to avoid freezing. Conversely, nearly all temperate insects have these physiological mechanisms and a cold hardy stage that may: get rid of excess water prior to over-wintering, so that freezing ice crystals do not damage the tissues and produce glycerol (antifreeze) to release into the blood.

Although cold, our arctic blast most likely did little if anything to reduce insect populations this year. On a positive note, it is not unusual here in our coastal climate to have insects survive the cold of winter only to die because of nasty Spring weather. The Spring weather is more crucial for survival. A good example of this phenomenon is when yellow jackets are adversely affected by wet, cold periods in April and May, when the colonies are at a critical stage.

Question: Our lawn never seems to look as good as we hope for. I don't believe it has ever been thatched. Should we do that? When would be the best time? (from week of March 27)

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Answer: Before answering your question, we need to understand what thatch is and what it does. (Ed. Note - get full text from Don @ tapiod@wsu.edu) Early spring is the best time for thatch removal, especially if large amounts need to be removed. At this time all dead stems and roots which accumulate throughout the fall and winter can be removed. Turf grasses are partially dormant at this time and the least amount of injury occurs. If properly thatched, lawn grasses will recover quickly and exhibit their normal beauty when conditions are suitable for growth. If light thatch removal is all that is required, thatching can be done any time of the year.

Power rakes, rotary mower attachments, or other mechanically driven thatch machines are superior to hand rakes. Considerable force is necessary to slice or scratch into the grass mat and remove all of the dead material. Less thorough jobs are well done with hand rakes. If the thatch layer is 1/2 inch or more thick, a number of passes with the de-thatcher in different directions may be necessary. Several passes will produce large quantities of refuse, and the lawn may temporarily look ragged. Re-seeding may be necessary.

Dates to Keep In Mind

The Junior League of Olympia Gift and Garden Event is April 28-30. Thurston County Master Gardeners will be staffing a booth at this event to promote the program and Common Sense Gardening practices. Volunteers are needed to staff our booth. Show hours are from 10-6 and 11-4 (Sun.). Please contact Ernie Paul at 786-5445 ext. 7910 e-mail: paule@co.thurston.wa.us

- **March 31-April 1** - Rhododendron Species Foundation Sale, Weyerhaeuser Headquarters Parking Lot www.rhodygarden.org
- **April 7** - Thurston Co. Master Gardeners Class of 2006 Pot Luck and Graduation Party. Hawks Prairie Center, SPSCC. 10am.
- **April 8-9** - Hardy Plant Society of Oregon Spring Plant Sale, Washington County Fairplex, Hillsboro Oregon www.hardyplantsociety.org
- **April 20** - Cass Turnbull on Pruning. Olympia Chapter, American Rhododendron Society, American Legion hall (former Salmon Club) 3201 Boston Harbor Rd. NE, Olympia. Free.
- **April 20-23** - Spring Plant Expo and Sale, Puyallup Fair Grounds www.thefair.com
- **April 23** - Northwest Perennial Alliance Spring Plant Sale, Sand Point Magnuson Park. 10-3. www.northwestperennialalliance.org
- **April 28-30** - Jr. League Gift and Garden Event, St Martins Pavilion (see above)
- **April 29-30** - Pierce Co. MGF Spring Plant Sale and Education Fair, Pierce County Master Gardener Demonstration Garden, 7711 Pioneer Way, Puyallup
- **May 6** - Snohomish Co. MGF Spring Plant Sale, McCollum Park, 600 128th St. SE, Everett. 9-4.
- **May 6-7** - King County Master Gardener Foundation Plant Sale, Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41st, Seattle. 9-4 & 11-3.
- **May 12-13** - Kitsap Co. MGF Plant Sale, Kitsap Co. Fairgrounds, Bremerton. 9-5 & 9-2.
- **May 12-13** - SPSCC Spring Plant Sale, SPSCC Greenhouse area. 7:30-3 & 9-2.
- **May 12-14** - MsK Rare Plant Nursery Mothers' Day Sale, Kruckeberg Botanic Garden, 20312 15th Ave. NW, Shoreline, <http://msknursery.com>. 10-6 & 10-4 (Sun).
- **May 13** - Arboretum Foundation Mid May Plant Sale, Pat Calvert Greenhouse, Washington Park Arboretum, <http://arboretumfondation.org>. 10-2.
- **May 13** - Washington Native Plant Society Plant Sale, South Botanical Garden Visitor Center, 12001 Main St., Bellevue, 10-4. <http://wnps.org>.
- **May 20** - Thurston Co. MGF 15th Annual Spring Plant Sale, DirtWorks Demo. Garden, Olympia. 9-4.
- **May 27** - Spring Plant Sale, Point Defiance Greenhouses, 5402 N. Shirley St. Tacoma. 10-4.
- **June 1** - Thurston Co. MGF benefit tour. Dunn Gardens, Swanson's Nursery and the Kruckeberg Garden in NW Seattle.
- **July 29** - Garden Rhapsodies Tour
- **September 16** - Thurston Co. Master Gardeners Fall Plant Sale, DirtWorks

For the dates in blue, see the articles for more details!