



# The Common Sense Gardener

WSU Thurston County Master Gardener Newsletter

Volume 6

Issue 4

August 2006

## It's Fall Plant Sale Time - Already! by Lynda Bauer

**W**hat a wonderful summer we're having!

And.....If summer's here, can Fall be far behind?

**I**t may sound early, but our Fall Sale is SEPTEMBER 16<sup>th</sup>, and coming up fast. The Spring Sale was so successful, that we want to keep the ball rolling and cap it off with another Fun and Profitable Event.

**V**olunteers are once again being requested to sign up in advance. Are you interested in the same job you did so well in May? Or do you want to expand your horizons? Either way, NOW is the time to contact Lynda Bauer and let her know your choice (Marion will be out of town for part of the summer). [bauerjblb@peoplepc.com](mailto:bauerjblb@peoplepc.com) or 360-455-9236.

**A**s your home garden is blooming and beautiful now, we hope you are finding thriving plants and earmarking them for division and contribution to our Fall Sale. Please remember though, the plants need time to adjust to being uprooted and put in pots (remember 1 gallon minimum!) so we can sell something that looks good, and is going to stay alive! So don't wait until the last minute. The plants and customers will thank you for that!

**DONATED PLANTS MAY BE POTTED ON SITE ANY TUESDAY.**

**W**e are always looking for special, unique plants as well as our standard perennials. Calla lilies, bulbs, shrubs will be gratefully accepted. Evelyn Stewart will be arranging our displays again, and would love to see some fall bloomers.

**I**f you are able to pot and store your donations until early September, please let Nancy Mills ([nlmills@msn.com](mailto:nlmills@msn.com)) know the details so she can prepare the labels in advance. She needs lead time so we're not frantic with activity that last week!

**A** reminder -- It is important to provide ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION of plants. We are working to improve the quality of our plants and to give the customer all possible help in growing

*(Continued on page 2)*

### MG Contact Information

Closed Loop: Tam Crocker  
[crockergs@aol.com](mailto:crockergs@aol.com)

DirtWorks: Karen Walters  
[kswalters@comcast.net](mailto:kswalters@comcast.net)

Paula Nelson  
[ppn\\_home@yahoo.com](mailto:ppn_home@yahoo.com)

Connie Barclay  
[cmmbarcly@comcast.net](mailto:cmmbarcly@comcast.net)

Farmers Market: Bob Findlay  
[rfindlay@iastate.edu](mailto:rfindlay@iastate.edu)

Program  
Manager: Paul Feenan  
[feenanp@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:feenanp@co.thurston.wa.us)

### In This Issue

Fall Plant Sale	1-2
DW Garden News	2-3
DW Children's Garden News	3-4
MG at the OFM	4-5
Fasciation You Say?	5-6
CLP Garden Park	6-7
Leaf Casting Class	7
Fast Food Gardening	8
Foundation President's Column	9
Ask The Expert	9-11
Dates to Keep in Mind	12

### Next Newsletter Feature:



Please address any comments to Paul Feenan, Program Manager

(Continued from page 1)

the RIGHT PLANT IN THE RIGHT PLACE at their home.

**T**hanks to the trusty group of volunteers who have come out to the sale site every Tuesday our plants all look healthy! We always welcome new faces so please join us whenever you can! Opportunities for help still exist, such as:

- ☼ Watering - Faithful and tireless Mary Boston has been providing the extra watering needed on Saturdays for plants not on the irrigation system. Could you give an hour and a half to help in this area?
- ☼ Mow and clear a swatch outside the perimeter fence. The forest around our site is thriving, too, and encroaching. A fearless Jungle Jim or Jimeen is much needed.
- ☼ Mid-August - we will erect our Foundation Shed and need a work crew of six people. Curt Rosler and Tony Thrash will lead. Contact Lynda if you can help.

**D**o Cymbidium Orchids thrill your senses? We had several large pots donated and were able, in mid-July, to divide them into 34 smaller pots for sale. Chris Taylor from the Olympia Orchid Society guided us through the process reducing the mystique and fear factor by showing us “how-to” techniques. We also have five miniature apple trees donated for sale!

**S**o remember to let your friends and neighbors know that there is always something special available at our sales!



Example of Cymbidium Orchids

## DirtWorks Garden News by Karen Walters

**☼**nce again, it has been a busy summer. In our last article, you heard about all the tractor work, bamboo removal, picking up of rocks and gravel raking. This time we can announce that the pathways are in and the mixed border soil is in place and filled with plants. Master Gardeners came one Wednesday for planting and a pot luck lunch. Cliff Moore (WSU Extension Director in Lacey) joined us in the garden that morning and is really quite the gardener, and he can also move some pretty big rocks! We had a good turn out and had the planting done by 11:30 am. Since the plants were put in a little later in the year than planned, the hardest job has been to keep them well watered. A few things have gotten a little crispy, but that should improve as they get their roots settled and eventually as the planted trees get bigger.

**A**s the ‘new’ Dirtworks is taking shape, there are still so many things to accomplish. Some of these are :

- ☼ We have been working to get the weeds and grasses away from the fence where the rose garden committee has measured the area and will begin planning for planting next spring. Installing the new patio in that area is scheduled for September.
- ☼ The bamboo we kept was heeled in and will be put in place soon. It will cover part of the fence and begin forming a border where a nice sitting area will go.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

🌱 The flagstone is still sitting on pallets, but we plan to build that patio in August as well as painting the gazebo. This patio is at the front entrance and will be for the container garden. Speaking of containers, with money that has been donated, two large blue ceramic pots have been purchased for the front entrance. We are patiently waiting for some sales before purchasing plants for them. Also, Bob Findlay's neighbor donated some large terra cotta and fiberglass pots. That was really an unexpected bonus, so our container garden area is going to shape up much sooner than we expected.



Teamwork Getting the Mixed Border Planted

**A**s you can tell, everything is moving along at DirtWorks. We invite you to come and visit (and work if you possibly can, please). You'll be amazed and thrilled with the progress, and we would like to share what we have done with all the Master Gardeners. This is an opportunity to be involved in a monumental reworking of an area into an integrated garden space. You can learn "how-to" do many things that you may be thinking about for your own gardens, but don't have the experience. You can even steal some ideas, that's one thing we're here for!

## DirtWorks Children's Garden News by Karen Walters

**C**hildren, children, everywhere!

**W**e have had children in the garden on Tuesday mornings since school has been out. So far we have had lessons on seeds, butterflies, worm composting and basic botany. The attendance has been large each week, so I am thankful for the extra help from Master Gardeners this year. Earlier this year I spoke to a mom's group at St. Mike's, and a few of us went and helped at a booth planting sunflower seeds with children at "Super Saturday", an Evergreen College event. Both gave us exposure to new groups, and we have had children visiting that have never attended before.

**T**he plants in the garden are doing well, but then again, so are the weeds. Fortunately there are people who don't wish to work with the kids, but they have been dedicated to helping keep the garden area neat and tidy. Thank you!

**S**ome days, it has been extremely hot, and we just don't have much shade. So a canopy was purchased for the garden, and it has helped a great deal with the children's (and I might add the adult's) comfort during story and craft time.

(Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

The vegetables are getting big and we look forward to the time of harvest. There is one baby rabbit running around the garden and so far it hasn't eaten down the vegetable plants, unlike last year.

If you can, come by for a visit; it is fun to see the kids in action. (Editor's note: I was there the day the kids were working with the composting worms, and all of them were so fascinated! What a great age to teach them about composting and being good Earth stewards.)

## Children's Garden Events by Week

### Remaining Scheduled Events

August 1	Composting our Yard Waste
August 8	Creating with Flowers
August 15	Good Bug/Bad Bug
August 22	Roots and Shoots
August 29	Growing Plants Indoors

## Master Gardeners at the Olympia Farmers Market by Bob Findlay

*A mid-year report on the market demonstration garden.*

The clinic has a repaired awning and our major identification problem was resolved by having "WSU Master Gardeners Clinic" painted on it. The building has also been refurbished inside. We were inspired by HGTV decorating-on-a-dime programs and spent about \$99 for the project. Sandy Atkinson took over the clinic management and has done a commendable job of filling our clinic schedule as well as sorting through and organizing the informational materials. John Gepert donated a slightly newer computer and we now have a wireless network connection.

Some things that have been accomplished this year follow:

The topdressing of the display beds in February with Great Western's turf mix (two thirds topsoil and one third mushroom compost) resulted in the slow feeding and abundant vegeta-

*(Continued on page 5)*

tion visible in the garden this summer.

- 🌸 Dorothy Taylor redesigned and oversaw the replanting of the shade garden near the clinic building.
- 🌸 The iris border gave the best display yet, and the water-wise bed that was replanted last year provided a rich diversity of appropriate plants.
- 🌸 The trellis immediately outside the clinic was reconstructed, in March, by Richard Teman and myself. We were able to use rough-sawn cedar that was provided by Pfaff Lumber Mill, south of the airport.
- 🌸 We continue to upgrade plants on display by using the Great Plant Picks selections. We are working with market vendors to label the GPPs available in the market and on display in the garden.

**A**s you can see, lots has been accomplished. Some of the items that remain are the irrigation systems, the SE perennial border, and the herb garden which need work this year and next. We will also be looking for a new computer in the next year - or at least upgraded software for the one we have. Plant signage remains a problem due to the more than occasional theft of them from the garden. Computer generated plant labels will possibly be even more vulnerable. Therefore, before putting out new signage, we are developing a database from which signs can be readily and inexpensively replaced when lost or stolen.

**B**ecause of the fact that the Farmers Market is a tourist draw, we continue to have visitors from the Olympia area and well beyond; many people introduce themselves as master gardeners from around the country. The regular commitment that we are seeing among our many volunteers is a good sign that it is a fun place to be and that they enjoy sharing their knowledge and experience with other gardeners.

## Fasciation You Say? by Nancy Mills with help from Sandy Atkinson

**H**ere's one for you clinic buffs out there. Would you have known the answer if I didn't tell you up front?



Fasciated Snapdragon, Split Into Two  
Separate Flower Heads

**I** have several examples of fasciation (fàs-ē-ā-shen) in my garden this year. One is a snapdragon and the other is an Oriental lily. I remember being challenged with this in the clinic in March with a shoot from someone's forsythia bush, and Keith was able to ID it.

**A**ccording to our Sustainable Gardening Handbook, FASCIATION is distortion of a plant that results in thin, flattened, and sometimes curved shoots. Hortsense adds that it occurs in both woody and non-woody plants. Fasciated stems have a ribbed appearance, as if several stems have been fused together. Some mutations are stable, but often the growth will revert back to normal. Wikipedia says:

Fasciation (also cresting) has been observed in at least a hundred different plant species, includ-

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 5)

ing members of [Aloe](#), [Celosia](#), [Delphinium](#), [Digitalis](#), [Euphorbia](#), [Forsythia](#), [Primula](#), and many genera of [Cactaceae](#) and [Salix](#). Some varieties of [Celosia](#) are raised especially for their dependably fasciated flower heads, for which they are called "cockscorb".



Cockscomb

**W**hile doing research for this on the Internet, I realized that I've been observing this for years when I've seen what appear to be double headed flowers stuck together.

**I** can't wait to see how the lily looks while blooming, and will put a picture in the



Fasciated Oriental Lily

next issue.

**D**o you have any interesting things we can highlight in the newsletters? Contact me at [nlmills@msn.com](mailto:nlmills@msn.com).

## Closed Loop Garden Park by Tam Crocker

**S**ummer time and the weeds and lawn are not so busy growing. In the mean time, lemonade is on the menu and reclining in the easy chair whenever possible is a wonderful way to spend these warm summer days.

**R**eflections: The weeds: namely shot weed and fire weed made up most of the consternation for CLP this year. What a good job they did to keep us so busy for so long.

**C**omposting: This area is going well and we are proud of our results. Without the composting function of the garden, what would we do with all the yard waste?

**S**edum evaluation: The GPP perennial committee was in the garden on June 19th to evaluate the Sedum which has been planted for three growing seasons. The plants chosen will be included in the 2008 GPP selections.

**S**urprises: the Viburnum, 'Charles Lamont' which bloomed so well in late winter, has a sparse new flush of bloom.

**L**ooking ahead: The perennial plants now in trial include the newly planted Heuchera, Tiarella, Heucheralla and Geum. The woody plants are Sambucus, Berberis, and Viburnum.

**F**urther down the road: The County will be relocating the entrance to the garden, as they re-vamp the recycling center. There is a new site manager who is working on the proposed plans

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

developed sometime ago. Maybe this year, maybe next, definitely sometime in the future. Gratefully, we will be included in the discussions where we are affected.

**C**urrently in bloom: The Chitalpa, a Russian hybrid, is lovely, and the Astartia are doing well.

**S**o as the evening becomes cooler, and the birds are singing their good night songs, that's the summer news from CLP. Thanks to all the volunteers who make it such a success.



Astartia

## Leaf Casting Class by Dorothy Taylor

**H**ave you ever seen those beautiful concrete leaf castings at a garden show or gift shop and said "Gee, I wish I knew how to make one of those!"? Do you have a spot in the garden where nothing will grow, or that needs a focal point, or are you at a loss of what to give your friends and family for Christmas? Well, this class is for you! Please join Dorothy Taylor for a morning of fun and creativity on:



Saturday, August 26, 2006  
10:00 a.m. to noon  
Closed Loop Park  
Cost: \$15.00

**A**ll the materials will be provided for you to make and bring home your very own leaf casting. You will also be given written instructions and tips on how to make additional leaf castings at home. Leaves for casting will be on hand, although you are welcome to bring your own leaf as long as it no larger than 1 foot in diameter (sorry no rhubarb or gunnera leaves!) You will also want to choose a fairly thick leaf that has lots of deep grooves in the leaf or ribbing on the back (such as cabbage or hosta leaves).

**T**he class size is limited to 20 people (Master Gardener, Master Composter or Foundation members only) so be sure and sign up soon. **The deadline to register is August 15<sup>th</sup>.** Checks should be made payable to Tam Crocker and mailed to Janet Mandel, 4539 31st Ave NE, Olympia 98516. Any questions about the class can be directed to Dorothy Taylor at [dndtaylor@comcast.net](mailto:dndtaylor@comcast.net).

## Fast Food Gardening by Paul Feenan

Today I am working on-farm in Shelton. It is a hot day, ushering in the dog days of summer in earnest. I am spending most of my time on the farm these days caring for poultry flocks, building fence, moving irrigation, and potting up nursery stock.

Landscape planting has been put on hold until this fall and next spring, and major renovations will have their time in the future, so any gardening is that puttering about type of gardening. Ironically, on these hot summer days, I find myself engaged in the same tasks that I perform in the depths of winter. You remember, those dreary days where it's not cold or raining hard not enough to keep you in watching the tube or reading a book.

During January days I get that itch and look out the window to see what I call a sucker spot (a filtered beam of sunlight barely piercing the cloud cover). I gear up and dash out to pull weeds, prune or divide hardy perennials. Of course the showers start and the wind picks up and I am driven to the nearest greenhouse, chicken cover or shop (left to accept again that I am the sucker). I'll putter, organizing tools until I decide to venture out for a few minutes. These are my winter gardening days. They end early and find me in the living room pouring over a seed catalog dreaming of summer days.

Now it is summer and these past few days it has been too hot to garden for any length of time. I set my potting table up under the shade of the firs and only fence and irrigate when those slices of the pie are in shade. Inevitably I'm driven from my dense and dappled coverage to retrieve a tool or tend to the ladies in the hen house. While I'm out, I dash to a bed to weed, dead-head, and prune out dead wood. Quickly I am driven out of the oppressive heat and into my filtered sanctuaries.

Interesting, isn't it, how deep winter and summer find us engaged is the same type of hit and run gardening chores. What I find most remarkable is how I enjoy this activity. I am not overwhelmed by having to weed, hack or renovate an entire bed. My task does not have a clear beginning and end. I am simply taking care of a few responsibilities as I pass by. I committed years ago to maintain my garden this way. I read somewhere that one should not miss an opportunity to pull a weed or deadhead a spent bloom. I see myself as taking advantage of time and place to do the same. I feel better about it, probably because it no longer becomes drudgery somehow in my pee brain. Now there are still major landscape maintenance and revision projects. I wait until we have overcast and 60 something to tackle these projects.

In addition to my enjoyment I find that this tactic really makes a difference in my garden's appearance. My quick hitting winter/summer stops actually make a huge impact on my plants. A little care goes a long way. When I do have guests that walk about, all I find is a few weeds popping up here or there and a couple of heads to dead. I don't get all worked up. I take advantage of the opportunity to take care of a few things while I am there.

Take care of yourself through these dog days by not trying to do too much. At home or in our gardens try the hit and run style for extreme days. I think you'll find it makes a difference in your garden and your psyche!!

## Foundation President's Column by Mary Moore

 On Friday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, we will hold another Foundation Membership meeting starting at 6:00pm at St. Benedict's Church in Lacey. It will be the usual Pot Luck ( oh we are all such good cooks!!!!), a speaker, and then a membership meeting.

 Our membership meeting will feature a vote on some By-law changes. Some members of the Board worked as a Task Force to prepare wording for the Bylaw changes which concentrate on fine-tuning the Nominations and Elections process. There are no substantive changes, but procedures are clarified and easier to follow.

**A**nother Bylaw change which is indeed substantive concerns the official year in which the Board serves. Heretofore the Board is elected in October at the Annual Meeting and their terms start on November 1<sup>st</sup>. However, the Foundation fiscal year does not start until January 1<sup>st</sup> leaving a new Board with an end-of-the year budget – rather awkward. So the change involves changing the date when the new Board takes effect from Nov.1<sup>st</sup> to Jan.1<sup>st</sup> to coincide with the initiation of a new budget. This Bylaw change, if accepted by Foundation members, will have the added advantage of allowing the current Board to work with the new Board for a couple of months to assure a smooth transition.

**I**f you are not yet a member of the Foundation, you are still welcome to attend the Membership meeting as a guest. The guest status is for one time only. After that, your attendance at Foundation meetings is limited to Foundation members only. There are always opportunities to join the Foundation at this time at HALF PRICE - \$5.00. Such a deal!

### Master Gardener Foundation Board Members

*President*.....Mary Moore  
*Vice President*.....Sandy Atkinson  
*Secretary*..... Frankie Rasmussen  
*Treasurer* ..... Sharon Brown  
*State Rep.* ..... Bill Longnecker  
*Member Rep.* ..... Connie Roth  
*Marketing Director*:.....Deborah Welt  
*Membership Director*...Lynden Baum  
*Plant Sales Director* ..... Lynda Bauer  
*Policies & Procedures Director*  
..... Paula Nelson

## Ask the Expert by Don Tapio (Selected and edited for space - for complete articles go to the Lacey Clinic)

 **Question:** Even though we water our tomato plants on a regular basis the leaves have rolled up. What caused this to happen? We fear they may be infected with some kind of blight.

**A**nswer: Leaf roll on tomatoes is a fairly common occurrence. The leaflets of older leaves roll upward along the edges and curl around the mid-vein. The leaves have a normal green color and are firm and leathery to the touch. Eventually most of the leaves will be affected.

Tomato leaves curling, especially those near the top of the plants, do not indicate the so-called curly top disease of tomatoes that is frequently discussed in various garden publications. This virus disease, which causes only leaf symptoms, is extremely rare in Western Washington. More than likely, the curling leaves on your tomato plants are caused by physiological stress brought on by drought. The cool nights and warm, sunny days that are common this time of the year may be a contributing factor. The curling symptoms are nothing to worry about. It does not damage the fruit and will usually disappear with proper watering practices which prevent plants from getting too dry.

 **Question:** Last year we lost our tomatoes due to some kind of a fungus disease in early August. The foliage all turned brown and died almost overnight! What can we spray on our plants to prevent this disease this year?

*(Continued on page 10)*

(Continued from page 9)

**A**nswer: One of the most common foliar diseases of tomato is LATE BLIGHT, which is caused by the fungal pathogen *Phytophthora infestans*. The month of August is notorious for this disease. The warm summer temperatures combined with dew, fog and rain are ideal conditions for the development of this disease. Fortunately, home gardeners can do a couple of things to prevent their tomato crop from being infected. First, placing a temporary roof over the plants thereby keeping moisture off the foliage will do much to prevent infection. Avoid wetting foliage when irrigating, especially in late afternoon and evening. Staking and pruning plants to provide good air circulation will also help.

Fungicide sprays, before disease begins, is the only method that can prevent complete crop destruction. Fungicides registered for use include Bravo Weather Stik and Kop-R-Spray. Fungicides applied now, according to labeled directions will protect plants from infection. Labeled directions suggest sprays may need to be repeated at 7 to 10 day intervals.

**Q**uestion: We have several trees in our landscape that don't look healthy. They have a thinning canopy and premature leaf drop. They do not have any visible disease or insect problems. Is there anything we can do to help these trees regain their vigor?

**A**nswer: Trees in decline have an unthrifty look to them. Often leaves are fewer than normal, and overall growth has been poor. Internode length (the space between each year's twig bud scars) decreases from several inches to less than 0.5 inch. Leaves may have yellow or brown margins, and tips may be smaller than normal. There may be premature autumn coloration and early leaf drop. Twigs at the ends of branches may die back, and often limbs at the top of the tree will be drying and bare of leaves. Dead branches can occur next to apparently healthy branches. (More in the July 17 article at the clinic.)

**Q**uestion: Now that our strawberries have finished fruiting, is there anything we should do to insure a good crop next year?

**A**nswer: You can maintain a strawberry planting for several fruiting seasons if you properly manage and renovate it after harvest. If plants are vigorous and relatively free from weeds, insects and diseases, you may renovate a matted row of June-bearers to prepare it for the next season. Renovation improves the next season's yield and may decrease fruit rot significantly, especially if leaves are removed. Renovation is not recommended for day-neutrals or ever-bearers.

After the crop has been harvested, mow the foliage to about two inches above the top of the crowns. You can use hedge clippers or a rotary lawn mower with the blade raised high. Be careful not to damage crowns. Remove all plant debris and bury it.

Narrow the rows to a strip 8 to 10 inches wide using a rototiller, shovel, or hoe (go no deeper than 1 to 2 inches). Thin out old and weak plants. The best plant density is about 5 to 6 plants per square foot of row. (More in the July 17 article at the clinic.)

**Q**uestion: Now that the warm weather has arrived. Our apple trees are losing leaves. We have been watering it on a regular basis, but the leaves continue to fall. What's going on?

**A**nswer: I suspect your apple tree is infected with a fungus disease which is commonly referred to as "apple scab". This disease is easily recognized by the olive-green, or brownish black velvety spots of various sizes which develop on both surfaces of the leaves. The spots most often are round. Many times they have a fringe of radiating lines of fungus growth. Spotted leaf tissue often is raised or otherwise distorted. Infected areas may be irregularly shaped and cover most all of the leaf. Affected leaf tissue becomes yellowish and then brown. Serious leaf drop can occur by mid-summer, thus weakening the tree.

The key to successfully controlling scab is to apply fungicides early and thoroughly to protect new growth. WSU plant pathologists recommend applying the fungicide Captan according to labeled directions for the prevention of apple scab. Spray applications now will help to prevent infection of the scab fungus on newly formed leaves and fruit. (More in the July 10 article at the clinic.)

**Q**uestion: We recently saw an advertisement in a garden magazine for a product that will automatically remove thatch accumulations in lawns. Does it really work?

**A**nswer: "Wonder Amendments" such as bacteria, yeast's, enzymes, and other "miracle cures" have no significant on thatch accumulation. Natural decomposition will occur from the organisms that are already in your soil when the lawn area is well drained and the soil pH is neutral (between 6 and 7). If your soil is acidic, periodically apply lime

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

to bring it up to neutral. A thatch layer of 0.5 to 0.75 inch is generally acceptable in home lawns, but anything greater can begin to cause problems and should be mechanically removed.

**Q**uestion: We seem to be getting conflicting information on whether we should or should not lightly sprinkle our plants on hot days to cool them off. Some garden books suggest we do this, while others say the water acts as a magnifying glass and will result in scalding the foliage. Which is correct?

**A**nswer: Your question is certainly appropriate this time of the year when we experience some of the warmest temperatures of the growing season. Research conducted at the University of Arizona found that it is difficult to establish whether "sunsald" and other solar induced leaf injuries are caused by solar radiation alone or by a combination of factors such as extreme temperature fluctuations, excessive temperatures, and adverse water relations.

Based on all of this research it would appear that mid-day sprinkling does indeed cool off plant leaves. At the same time, it may well result in some leaf damage. (More in the July 3 article at the clinic.)

**Q**uestion: We continue to hear about using Vinegar for weed control. Does it really work?

**A**nswer: In May 2002, the USDA Agricultural Research Service issued a press release describing their research on weed control using vinegar. Green house and field studies indicated that while 5 percent vinegar solutions (commonly found on grocery store shelves) did not produce reliable weed control, solutions of 10, 15 and 20 percent provided 80 to 100 percent control of certain annual weeds. (foxtail, lambs quarters, pigweed, and velvetleaf). Perennial weeds (Canada thistle) treated with a 5 percent vinegar showed 100 percent shoot burn down but roots were not affected, therefore shoots always re-grew.

**Q**uestion: We just read a garden article which recommended using nematodes to kill root weevils around rhododendron plants. We thought nematodes killed plants! Have you ever heard of this?

**A**nswer: You are both correct. Nematodes are well documented for their negative impact on plant growth. However, there are certain nematodes which will not attack or damage plants. These microscopic roundworms kill all stages of certain soil-dwelling insects. They enter an insect through body openings and release a toxic bacterium as they feed. The host insect dies within a few days. When applied properly and at the correct time, parasitic nematodes are active against more than 200 insect species, including root weevil larvae, European crane fly larvae, cutworms, and pest beetle grubs. (More in the June 19 article at the clinic.)

**Q**uestion: What exactly are insecticidal soaps?

**A**nswer: Sodium or potassium salts of fatty acids are the active ingredient in insecticidal soap. Soap kills insects primarily by damaging their cuticle. It is useful against soft bodied pests such as aphids, thrips, whiteflies, spider mites, and scales. It is non-toxic to humans and biodegrades rapidly. It may kill predatory insect larvae that are feeding on pests when soap is applied. Otherwise it is safe for most beneficials. Insecticidal soap must contact pests directly in order to kill them. It is effective only while still wet; there is no residual activity after it dries. It usually does not kill insect eggs, so repeat sprays often are not necessary to control newly hatched pests. Soap can damage certain plants. Use it according to label directions and do not use it on water-stressed plants or if the weather is very hot. Another way to avoid damage is to spray plants, let the soap dry, and then rinses it off with a spray of water.

There are many home-made recipes for insecticidal soap made from liquid dish-washing detergent. These sprays are risky to use because different detergents have different concentration of active ingredient. If spray is too concentrated it may harm plants.

**Q**uestion: We have a small creeping weed in our lawn that is in full bloom with tiny blue flowers. Our neighbor told us that it is called veronica or speedwell. How do we get rid of it?

**A**nswer: Creeping speedwell is a fairly common weed all over Western Washington. Home gardeners have been known to actually plant this weed for its beautiful pale, blue flowers which occur each spring. Unfortunately, it has a fairly aggressive growth habit and can become a nuisance weed in home lawns. Creeping speedwell is not controlled by most of the herbicides commonly used on turfgrass such as 2,4-D and MCPA. WSU currently lists DCPA (Dacthal), Dthiopyr (Dimension) and isoxaben (Gallery) as providing effective control when used according to labeled directions. If the infestation is small enough, hand digging may provide the best control option.

**There's lots more wisdom shared by Don that doesn't fit here. Be sure to stop by the clinic and read all the Garden Articles. They come out weekly! Other topics include but are not limited to bee and wasp nests, lawn care, moles, planter drainage, and so much more!!!!**

# Dates to Keep In Mind

## Plant Sales

### **HARDY PLANT SOCIETY OF OREGON FALL PLANT SALE**

**Saturday/Sunday, September 9-10  
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

Washington County Fairplex,  
Hillsboro, OR  
For information call 503-224-5718 or  
[www.hardyplantsociety.org](http://www.hardyplantsociety.org)

### **MASTER GARDENER FOUNDATION OF THURSTON COUNTY 2ND ANNUAL FALL PLANT SALE**

**Saturday, September 16  
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

DirtWorks Demonstration Garden

### **NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY FALL PLANT SALE**

**Friday, September 22, 1pm - 6:30pm  
Saturday, September 23, 9am - 3pm**

Sand Point Magnuson Park,  
7400 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle  
For information call 206-527-1794 or  
if you are a NHS member and would  
like to volunteer to work the sale,  
please email Volunteer Co-  
Coordinators Joyce Hawkins at [scorpiojh@comcast.net](mailto:scorpiojh@comcast.net) or  
Lois Willman at [merriam@scattercreek.com](mailto:merriam@scattercreek.com)  
so they can hold a favorite job and time slot  
for you.

### **ARBORETUM FOUNDATION FALL BULB SALE**

**Sunday, October 1, 10 am - 3 pm**  
Graham Visitors Center, 2300 Arboretum Drive East, Seattle.  
For information call 206-325-4510 or  
[http://www.arboretumfoundation.org/plant\\_sales/plant\\_sales.cfm](http://www.arboretumfoundation.org/plant_sales/plant_sales.cfm)

## Classes, Tours and Other Activities

### **CREATING HYPERTUFA POTS WITH CHRIS EBERLY**

**Saturday, August 5 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

Location: Closed Loop Park  
Fee: \$25. Includes materials for two pots you will take home. Registration limited to Master Gardeners/Master Composters  
For information contact Tam Crocker [crockergs@aol.com](mailto:crockergs@aol.com)

### **IF YOU GROW ORNAMENTALS YOU CAN GROW VEGETABLES**

**Tuesday, August 8, 9:30 am - 3pm**

Location: Lois Willman's Garden, Tenino  
Fee: NHS Members: \$35.00 Non-members: \$55. For information contact [nwhort@aol.com](mailto:nwhort@aol.com) or Lois Willman at [merriam@scattercreek.com](mailto:merriam@scattercreek.com)

### **MASTER GARDENER FOUNDATION OF THURSTON COUNTY MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**Friday, August 25, 6 p.m.**

Pot Luck, Continuing Education and Foundation membership meeting  
St. Benedict's Church  
910 Bowker Street SE, Lacey  
Come and meet Paul Feenan!

### **LEAF CASTING WITH DOROTHY TAYLOR**

**Saturday August 26, 10am - noon**

Location: Closed Loop Park  
Fee: \$15, to cover cost of materials  
Registration limited to Master Gardeners/Master Composters, and MGFTC members  
For information contact Tam Crocker [crockergs@aol.com](mailto:crockergs@aol.com)

## **WSU MASTER GARDENER ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**Thursday/Friday September 7-8**

Location: South Seattle Community College. Watch your mail for the brochure or register online at <http://mastergardener.wsu.edu/mgconf/>

### **THE ROMANCE OF CHINESE PLANTS - Their Role in Art, Literature, Symbolism and Everyday Life**

**Thursday, September 14, 7:30 p.m.**

Join Peter Valder at Meany Hall for the Performing Arts at the University of Washington near the intersection of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 40<sup>th</sup> Street. Reservations accepted beginning Monday, August 7 at 9 a.m. by contacting Miller Garden at 206-362-8612 or email: [info@millergarden.org](mailto:info@millergarden.org). The lecture and reception are free and funded by the Pendleton and Elisabeth C. Miller Charitable Foundation.

