



Vol. 1, Issue 3: July-September 2020

WE HOPE YOU ARE WELL AND DOING ALL YOU CAN TO KEEP OTHERS HEALTHY TOO. The COVID-19 pandemic continues, as do the difficulties and uncertainties that go with the widespread transmission of the disease.

Many of the Master Gardener and Master Recycler/Composter activities planned for this summer have been cancelled or postponed. Nonetheless, some events and activities continue in a limited fashion or have been modified to limit the spread of the disease. We have outlined these events and activities below.

The number of COVID-19 cases and emerging information about its transmission and treatment will continue to guide state and local decisions about what events can continue or when cancelled activities may start again. Please do not make assumptions about what you can or cannot do as Master Gardeners or Recycler/Composters based on what you may read in newspapers, see on TV, or read on social media or the Internet.

Conditions may change quickly. The best source of new information will be the *Friday Flash* or Zoom session Volunteer Check-In (See “Things Are Zooming Along,” below). We need to follow Cori Carlton’s instructions in order to ensure our activities are conducted as safely as possible.

WHAT’S NEW...

- **Plant Sale.** Although we had to cancel our May 16th annual plant sale, the plants at the nursery at Dirt Works in Olympia’s Yauger Park are for sale. This is your chance to get some great plants and support the Master Gardener Foundation. But, here are the rules:
 - Only Thurston County Master Gardeners, Master Recycler Composters and MGFTC members can buy plants.
 - The plants are not for sale to the general public or to friends or family of volunteers.
 - Plant shopping and purchase times are available by appointment only on Wednesdays from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm and on Saturday mornings from 9:00 until noon.

- Midge Price and Nancy Mills are managing the sale. To make an appointment to shop for and purchase plants contact Midge Miller at: Midgemillerprice@comcast.net.
- You cannot shop if you are sick or showing any symptoms associated with COVID-19, or if you have had a positive test result for the virus but are not showing any symptoms.
- At all times you must wear a mask over your nose and mouth, and you should wear gloves while shopping for plants. Also, you must maintain a distance of at least six feet from all other persons. See the *Friday Flash* for more details.
- Make A Donation. The “Donate” page on the MGFTC website has been updated to work with any web browser. This change makes it easy to donate to support our programs, especially this year when many of our fund-raising events have been cancelled. Just click on the “Donate” link at the top of the MGFTC website home page.
 - Buy Your Tools Here. You can buy some great gardening tools and gear on the MGFTC website. JoAnne Reitzwood, Roy Emory, and Lynette Anderson created this mechanism to help raise funds for the Foundation. Take a look, buy some gear, and help the Foundation. Just click on the “Sales” link at the top of the MGFTC website home page.
 - Hey; We Need Some Volunteers. The MGFTC Board is looking for members interested in serving as the Foundation President Elect, Treasurer Elect, and Secretary next year. If you would like to “step-up” and serve, please contact Charley Barron at charleybarron2019@gmail.com .
 - **HELP!** The Q & A Clinic Needs Volunteers, too. Spring and summer are the busy seasons for the Q & A Clinic. Even though the County Extension Office is closed, we are running the Q & A Clinic via email. Those MGs and MRCs that have volunteered are working from home and responding to emailed questions from home gardeners. But the questions keep piling up, and we could use some more certified folks to help with the workload. If you’ve worked in the Clinic before, you will find that the process of working from home is not that much different than working at the Extension Office. At 1:00 pm each Tuesday through August 11, there is a Zoom Meeting for those doing this work. The process is simple. Check out the latest addition of the *Friday Flash* for instructions on how to join a Zoom session and contact Cori Carlton to volunteer for the Q & A Clinic.
 - Save the Date. You’ve probably heard that **Bloomin’ Bingo** has been cancelled. But in its place on Thursday evening, September 10th, we’ll have Marianne Binetti hosting a live video fundraiser. Save the date and stay tuned for more details! This is vital fundraising event for the Foundation, so be sure to mark your calendars now. And, according to Barb Baker CE hours may be earned for participating in this event.

THINGS ARE ZOOMING ALONG...

Because “in person” meetings are potential COVID-19 “mass spreading” events, many meetings are being held via Zoom, a program operated on smart phones or home computers using the internet. The details for joining these meetings are listed in the *Friday Flash*. You should check it out.

At first the process for attending one of these meetings may seem daunting, but it is not that hard. Most laptop and newer desktop computer and cell phones have cameras that will let you send a video image of yourself to other meeting attendees while pictures of them will be shown on your screen. You can talk back and forth---albeit one at a time---and enjoy seeing old friends and taking note of their long hair, their pets, their clothes, and maybe their beards. Use this website: <https://extension.wsu.edu/thurston/gardening/> to familiarize yourself with Zoom. To find out how to set up a free Zoom account go to: <https://youtu.be/dim2rOV--zg>.

Here are the meetings being held via Zoom:

- MGFTC Membership Meetings. The first Zoom membership meeting was held on June 25th. More to be scheduled.
- All MG and MRC Volunteer Check-Ins. See the *Friday Flash* for meeting times, dates, and connection information.
- MRC Café. Again, check the *Friday Flash* for times, dates, and connection information.
- Bloomin' Bingo? While details have not been announced, it is likely this event will be held via Zoom.
- Q & A Clinic Volunteer Check-Ins. Every Tuesday afternoon at 1 o'clock.

GOT SOME GOOD BOOKS?

Have you been cleaning house during the COVID-19 shutdown and gathered up some books you no longer want? Well, the Little Library at Closed Loop Park (CLP) demonstration garden at Hawks Prairie needs a few good books. Just take them to CLP and put them in the free Little Library box. While gardening books are preferred, any books suitable for general reading are appreciated.

A GIANT THANK YOU...

To retiring Plant Sale Co-Chairs Midge Price and Meagan Thorn. Midge is a Class of 2009 Master Gardener and has been chair of the Plant Sale Committee for six years and co-chair with Meagan for three years. She has said that there have been many challenges over the years, especially the “uncontrolled factors.” Often, she had to make “on the fly” decisions which worked to help make the plant sale a success year after year. Meagan became a Master Gardener in 2013 and has been co-chair with Midge for the last three years. She cites the frequent break-ins at the growing area and having to move plant pots so many times and so often as some of her greatest challenges. The majority of the Foundation’s funds comes from the annual plant sales. During their tenure as co-chairs, they have increased the total sales each year. Both plan to continue to serve the MGFTC in other roles. So, when you see them again, be sure to thank them for serving so well as chair and co-chairs.

AND WELCOME TO...

Marcia Justis and Laura Westrup are the new Plant Sale Committee co-chairs. Marcia became a Master Gardener in 2013; Laura finished her Master Gardener training in 2015. Both are avid, long time gardeners who look forward to working with the members of the Plant Sale Committee, including the past committee chairs, to make future plant sales as successful as those

we've held in past years. Thanks go to Laura and Marcia for stepping forward to co-chair this important Foundation activity.

WHAT IS HAPPENING, WHAT IS NOT...

- As Cori has made clear in the *Friday Flash* most in-office and outreach events and activities are cancelled through July 31. Those currently scheduled for August and September may be cancelled, postponed, or modified. Keep up to date by reading the *Friday Flash* or attending the Volunteer Check-In Zoom meetings for timely news about activities and events.
- Limited maintenance activities continue at Closed Loop Park, Dirt Works and in the plant nursery. Only those persons on demo garden or plant sale committees can work at these locations. People working in these locations must follow special procedures. If you are not already designated to work at one of these locations, please do not just show up expecting to help.
- The County Extension Office is closed until further notice.

AND, FINALLY...

We are in our fifth month of trying to avoid the COVID-19 virus. Most of us are frustrated by our inability to gather, to work together, to enjoy the company of other people. We've postponed family birthday parties and cancelled restaurant reservations. No vacations this summer! We are darn tired of wearing face masks, of keeping social distances, and trying to master the technical details of ZOOM and SKYPE meetings.

For some, isolation fatigue has caused us to be a little reckless. People have begun to rationalize **not wearing facemasks and not keeping their distance from others**. We see neighbors going off to shop without masks and people hosting backyard gatherings with everyone sitting closely together. We might think, "Well, those folks seem fine; they haven't caught the virus."

BUT... now is not the time to let up on following the rules to maintain our health. Face masks and social distancing are still necessary----and they may be needed for some months to come. Despite the opening of businesses and counties moving to "Phase 3 or Phase 4," the COVID-19 virus is still out there, still trying to find its next victims.

We must keep our faith in and use the simple tools medical experts have told us will keep us healthy: PLEASE: **WEAR THE MASKS... KEEP YOUR DISTANCE FROM OTHERS... WASH YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY... KEEP OUT OF TIGHT, CROWDED SPACES WHERE THE VIRUS MAY LINGER IN THE AIR... DON'T ATTEND LARGE GATHERINGS**, and so on.

We value each of you. We want you and yours to be safe, healthy, and virus-free. There will be an end to this pandemic. Until then, all of us need to hang in there and keep ourselves and each other safe.