



Vol. 2, Issue 1: January-March 2021

WHERE ARE WE AND WHAT LIES AHEAD? We live in an extraordinary time. If a year ago someone made a prediction listing what we have been through in the past twelve months, you probably would have said they were nuts. Yet, here we are in the middle of a deadly pandemic that has killed over two million people world-wide, more than 400,000 of those in the United States. And thousands who have survived the Covid-19 virus have lingering, debilitating mental or physical conditions. We have witnessed two impeachments of the President, a deadly riot at the national capitol, monstrous forest fires and hurricanes, a plummeting economy, closed businesses, massive unemployment, shuttered schools, social unrest, protests, and a contested presidential election. We have gone long periods without seeing friends and family members up close and personal. We have adjusted to isolating ourselves by using technology. Who would have thought that most school classes, family visits, business meetings, and social gatherings, would be conducted over the Internet? One observer has labeled this phenomenon the “zoomification” of society.

Despite all this, in the winter of our discontent, as gardeners who spend our hours with the good earth and plants, we know that the sun will surely rise tomorrow. For the next six months it will linger above the horizon a little more each day, warming the soil to kindle the fires of spring. In trees and bushes sap will rise from roots and swell flower and leaf buds until they pop with color. Bulbs will send up stems to bloom with reds and golds and purples. Seeds and starts will take root in gardens and flower beds. In late spring and in summer and early fall, we will pick fruits, vegetables, and flowers. Nature’s circle of life in the garden continues as it has for many thousands of years.

And like nature, the WSU Master Gardener and Master Recycler Composter Programs and your Foundation have continued to flourish despite the setbacks and restrictions we had to put up with. This newsletter highlights some of the many program accomplishments during the past year, takes note of the changes that have occurred, and provides a brief look at brighter days ahead.

2020 ACHIEVEMENTS

- We Did Some Things A Little Differently Last Year. Covid-19 threw a monkey wrench into our normal schedule and how we conducted activities. After we got over the shock of

the “new normal” of life during a pandemic, we made adjustments and had a highly successful year.

- The May 16th Annual Plant Sale was cancelled. Instead of the annual sale, we sold plants by appointment and brought in about \$15,000.
- Our annual Blooming Bingo fundraiser had to be converted to a Zoom gathering. Marianne Binetti gave a “Gardening Trivia” presentation interspersed with prize drawings. We raised over \$2,000 with this event.
- The Children’s Garden Summer Program was cancelled. On the bright side our gardens produced over 1,600 pounds of produce for the local food bank to feed hungry families.
- Some monthly Foundation meetings were cancelled last spring. We soon figured out how to hold these meetings using Zoom technology.
- Training sessions and committee meetings were held over the Internet rather than in person.
- Work parties at our demonstration gardens and the Foundation plant sale garden became highly regulated with volunteers working with reduced capacity at some distance from one another to keep the gardens looking good through the summer and fall.
- The Foundation’s annual meeting was converted from a holiday season potluck into a well-attended Zoom meeting and fund raising event.
- The Gardening/Recycling/Composting Q and A Clinic converted to taking and answering queries via the Internet. This was especially important during the onset of the pandemic when many people turned to gardening as a safe family activity and as a way to produce food for their households.
- Foundation website sales of 2021 calendars, tools and gardening gear were strong, exceeding projected sales numbers.
- Though fund-raising events were limited, the Foundation’s prior fiscal planning and maintenance of reserves means that the organization continues to be fiscally sound and able to support programs in 2021.

WHAT’S NEW...

- Annual Meeting. Held in early December, the 2020 Annual Meeting produced changes in the Foundation leadership. And, we said goodbye to several retiring Foundation officers. The Foundation Board recognized some members for their many contributions to and continued involvement with the programs the Foundation supports. Last but not least, some members tuning in the meeting won “door prizes.”
 - The 2021 Foundation Board members are:
 - President: Barb Baker president@mgftc.org
 - (New) President-Elect: Midge Price president-elect@mgftc.org
 - Vice President: Donna Doerer vice-president@mgftc.org
 - (New) Secretary: Pam Lovinger secretary@mgftc.org
 - State Representative: George Cowan state-rep@mgftc.org

- Treasurer: Bev Bartlett treasurer@mgftc.org
 - Member-At-Large: Sharon Parsons member-at-large@mgftc.org
 - Program Manager: Cori Carlton cori.carlton@co.thurston.wa.us
- Big THANK YOUS! to both retiring Past President Charley Barron and Secretary Pam Roberts who spent countless hours helping guide the Foundation's work over the last few years.
- "Door Prize" winners were:
 - Beverly Gross, Joyce Kilmer, and Kathleen Heidenreich each received a MGFTC 2021 Calendar.
 - Bev Bartlett won Yard Glove Lotion.
 - Karla Salp won a pruner.
 - Lynette Anderson received a potato bag and potholders.
 - Midge price won a paid 2021 MGFTC membership.
 - Joan Aspaas received a coffee mug and seeds.
- Recognition Awards included:
 - *Fund Raising:*
 - Julie Sandberg for her work replacing Blooming Bingo with Marianne Binetti's "Gardening Trivia" Zoom presentation.
 - Barb Baker for leading the development of the popular MGFTC 2021 Calendar.
 - Joanie Zelasko for handling on-line handicraft sales.
 - Donna Doerer for assembling a volunteer team to secure grant income for the Foundation.
 - Laura Westrup and Marcia Justis for taking over the annual plant sale and converting it to a "sale by appointment only" success with gross sales exceeding \$15,000.
 - The *Fundraising Team Award* went to the Calendar Committee for developing and marketing the 2021 Calendar. Team members include Barb Baker, Kris Mansfield, Rod Baker, Donna Doerer, Sandy Gast, Ralph Gross, Linda Lufkin, Pam Roberts, and Carrie Seachord.
 - Aimee Christy and LeeAnn Perry received the *Advocacy Award* for their constant involvement and enthusiastic promotion of community recycling and composting projects.
 - *Service Awards* went to:
 - Roy Emory for his constant and valuable maintenance of the MGFTC website including the development of easy-to-use online interface for sales of tools, handicrafts and the 2021 calendar.
 - Pam Roberts who spent the last four years as Foundation Board Secretary and was always ready and continues to be ready to lend a hand to support our programs.
 - Jim Thomas for volunteering to edit and produce the quarterly *Roots n Shoots* Foundation newsletter.

- The *Honorary Master Gardener Award* went to Sam Hales who helped Barb Baker set up and use Zoom to run Foundation Board meetings and other events. Without the use of this technology Foundation leadership would not have been able to maintain communications with our membership.
 - The *Dorsay Fisher Award* is presented to those WSU Master Gardeners who have been active for more than seven years and have contributed over a thousand hours of service. This year's recipients were Joan Aspaas (1,034 hours), Sandra Gast (1,013.5 hours), Marcia Justis (1,003 hours), and Kay Zambone (2,481 hours).
 - Other Business included a report by George Cowan, the Foundation's State Representative, and an appeal to renew members' annual membership (which can be done online using the links on the Foundation's Internet webpage www.mgftc.org). Joyce Kilmer was the successful bidder for the Annual Meeting fundraiser sale item, taking home the seed starting shelf unit.
- We Are Always Looking for a Few Good Volunteers. The Foundation supports the gardening and recycling/composting programs of the Washington State University's county extension office. We rely upon the time, knowledge, and skills of members to help us grow and sell plants; assist the public; organize, publicize, and conduct fundraising events; communicate to members, and sell tools and handcrafted items to members and the public. Each year there will be spots to fill on various committees.
 - If you believe you can help, here are the committees and how to contact them:
 - **Retail Sales:** retailsales@mgftc.org
 - **Handicraft:** crafts@mgftc.org
 - **Grants/Sponsorships:** vice-president@mgftc.org
 - **Plant Sale:** plantsale@mgftc.org
 - **Membership:** membership@mgftc.org
 - **Publicity:** publicity@mgftc.org
 - Website: webmaster@mgftc.org
 - Descriptions of committee responsibilities and activities are posted on the Foundation's website www.mgftc.org
 - Barb Baker has asked for additional volunteers to help with the development and sales of next year's Foundation Calendar. If you would like to help, contact Barb at president@mgftc.org
- Speaking of Calendars... Barb Baker says 2021 Calendars, Gardening Through the Seasons, are still available. You can buy one for only \$15. Click on "sales" on the ribbon at the top of the Foundation's home webpage.



- Time to Renew Your Foundation Membership. Your membership is only \$10 a year, and what a bargain. If you have not renewed your annual membership just go to the Foundation webpage (www.mgftc.org), download and print the membership form, fill it out, enclose your check for \$10.00, and mail it to: MGFTC Attn: Membership, P.O. Box 165, Olympia, WA 98507-0165.
- Get to Know CERVIS. This is a new program through which WSU Master Gardeners and Recyclers Composters will volunteer for program activities. Each person participating in the programs needs to complete a profile and begin using the system. Complete instructions have been and will be provided in the *Friday Flash*. Please check for these instructions, and if you have not completed your profile, please do so as soon as possible.
- Recommitment. If you have not completed the recommitment process to continue with the MG and MRC programs, you need to do so as soon as possible. Please contact Jennifer Post at Jennifer.post@co.thurston.wa.us to get directions about how to complete the process.
- Next Foundation Membership Zoom Meeting. Thursday, February 18, 2020. Meeting begins at 6:30 PM. Watch for notification of a link to the Zoom meeting.

WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING? There are a variety of educational opportunities available on the Internet. These can be classes, virtual events, archived recordings, or videos. Keep in mind that statements made by presenters at non-MGFTC sponsored events are theirs alone and may not be endorsed by or reflect the positions of Washington State University, the WSU Master Gardener and Master Recycler Composter Programs of Thurston County or the Master Gardener Foundation of Thurston County.

With that said, check out the following potentially educational and entertaining possibilities (more complete descriptions are provided on the Foundation's website (www.mgftc.org)).

- Northwest Perennial Alliance---Virtual Garden Tours. <https://vimeo.com/user114572010>
- WSU's "Gardening in Washington State" (This is a good one.) <http://gardening.wsu.edu/home>
- Cowlitz County Master Gardeners "Virtual Gardening Lecture Series." Three lectures for \$15. To register and learn more go to <https://www.ticketsource.us/wsue-extension-master-gardeners/t-roqreo>
- Pierce County MG Master Gardener Podcasts <https://extension.wsu.edu/pierce/mg/resources/>
- From the Clallam County Master Gardeners, the "Green Thumb Education Series." <https://extension.wsu.edu/clallam/mg/resources/local-articles/>
- Mason County's Master Gardeners have made their "Through the Garden Gate Workshop Series" available over the Internet. There is a cost for accessing the online presentations. For more information see the Master Gardeners Foundation of Mason County website. <https://extension.wsu.edu/mason/master-gardener/>
- Native Plant Society Virtual Events. See <https://www.wnps.org/wnps-annual-events/virtual-events>

AND, FINALLY...

We do not know what the future holds, but there are reasons to hope that this year, perhaps by the end of 2021, we will feel that things have returned to normal. We have learned to adapt to the necessary restrictions of distances, mask wearing, remote learning, “zooming” meetings, and social isolation. Vaccines hold out to us the possibility that we may become immune to Covid-19 or if infected that we will not develop fatal infections. Our programs will continue, our gardens will bloom, and with patience, careful practices, and a little luck we will all make it through. Please keep doing all the right things.

Remember that 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.