



THE GARDENER'S VIEW

Molly McNulty, editor

May/june, 2009

Hello, All,

With the spring weather finally here, my garden is beginning to stretch and breathe. I have found muscles I never knew I had with all the torso twists, weed crunches, back bends and wheelbarrow lifting. Who needs a health club?!

My husband Richard was determined to be suckered into planting during that early spell of warm we had, and after starting scarlet runners, cucumbers and other assorted veggies indoors, he put them in the garden and it immediately froze. He knew it was a risk, but couldn't help himself. Is that a true gardener or what? I was heart broken when I lost my 20 year-old rosemary in that late cold spell. Talking to others, I don't think I was the only one who lost established plants. Well, as my ninety-year old aunt says, "That's spring."

I'm looking for a new newsletter editor. This newsletter will be my last since I don't do one during the summer months. I will meet with anyone who wants to take on the job and train them in what I have done or offer tips for

something new. But, after three years as editor, it's time for me to put my energies somewhere else- like the garden and the plant clinics! SO if you have an interest, email me and we can set up a time to talk.

See you in the garden!

Everything is coming up green

BRITT'S NOTES Britt Shellenberger

A 2009 Extension MG Survey done by USDA/CSREES found that there are 94,865 current Master Gardener volunteers in the US who volunteered 5,197,573 hours, valued at \$64.5 million.

More interesting information revealed:

79% of Master Gardener hours were in metropolitan counties ·

21% of Master Gardener hours were in rural counties

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- 4,850,285 personal contacts included telephones, e-mails, live audience presentations and site visits
- 14.4% of contacts were to under-served audiences
- 685,554 pounds of produce were donated to local food banks
- 293,017 hours were devoted to youth gardening

Thank you for all of your support of our Master Gardener program

KNOW AND GROW UPDATES

Diana Wisen

April Know & Grow-April 21

WSU Vegetable Specialist, Dr. Carol Miles, gave a timely presentation about growing vegetables. We learned the most difficult part here in Skagit Valley is having warm enough soil temperatures to support germination and healthy growth in time for the plants to reach maturity. We have a long growing season but not a lot of heat units. Cool season crops do the best. For warm season crops such as corn, squash, and tomatoes you need to choose varieties that require fewer days to maturity and even then add at least 10 days to the time suggested on the seed packet. She suggested plant starts whenever possible.

The workshop was well attended with 87 people.

May Know & Grow-Drip Irrigation

Tuesday, May 26, 1-3:30, WSU NWREC

It may be damp out there now, but come the end of May many of us will have begun to water some parts of our garden.

Tuesday, May 26, Dr. Jeff Thompson from Snohomish County gave a detailed presentation on Drip Irrigation. This was a 2 ½ hour talk with

additional hands on time in our Discovery Garden afterward. People came early to get a good seat. He talked about the benefits of low volume irrigation, types, design, special concerns such as sloping lots and answers individual questions. Let's make the best use of this most valuable natural resource---Water.

GARDEN MADNESS!

Normal Gardener Or Obsessed Gardener?

This came to me in a hospital auxiliary newsletter in 1999. Who wrote it? I have no idea. Submitted by Diane Hall

Normal Gardener : You won't leave town when your tulips are in bloom...

Obsessed Gardener: ...or your daffodils, your lilacs, your wisteria, your roses, your clematis, your lilies...

Normal Gardener : You have a charge account at the local garden center.

Obsessed Gardener: Your spouse buys all your Christmas presents there.

Normal Gardener : You invest in fine gardening tools.

Obsessed Gardener: You keep spare tools in your car for gardening emergencies.

Normal Gardener You have a compost heap.

Obsessed Gardener: You take its temperature every day.

Normal Gardener : You can't believe that you have ordered so many bulbs this fall...

Obsessed Gardener: ...and yet you're not sure you have enough.

Normal Gardener : You know the Latin names of your plants.

Obsessed Gardener: You use them in conversation.

Normal Gardener : You are proud of your baby carrots.

Obsessed Gardener: You carry pictures of them in your wallet.

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Normal Gardener : You can crush a Japanese beetle with your bare hands.

Obsessed Gardener: You love the sound it makes when you do.

Which one are you?

CRITTER CORNER GONE BUGGY



CURRENT BORER

Virgene Link,

Insect Collection

The Ribes are blooming! The red flowering currant is a harbinger of spring and the Rufus hummingbird times its return to coincide with the blossoms. Spring is finally arriving-- although it waited until April this year!

The currant borer (*Synanthedon tipuliformis*) is the most widely distributed species of the family. Originating in Europe, it is now found in Asia, North America, Australia and New Zealand. This clear wing moth is a serious pest of red, black and white currants; gooseberries; black elder and sumac. The female moth has three thin yellow bands around its purplish black abdomen. The male has four yellow bands on the abdomen. The wings are mostly clear with black and yellow scales on the veins. These moths have a nearly 3/4" wingspan and are good flyers. They can hover as well as fly about the bushes. At such a small size it may be mistaken for a hover fly or fly if you don't look closely.

Females deposit brown globular eggs in June, singly on the bark of younger stems. Larvae hatch and bore into the center of canes (pith) normally within the previous years' growth. The boring stunts the cane and reduces yield. The larvae are white with light brown heads and legs, and are about 1/2" long. They over-winter in the canes. They burrow toward the stem surface to pupate. Adults emerge in mid-May and will fly until about mid-July. There is one generation per year.

Many cultivars are highly infested especially in 2-year old or older canes with 2 or 3 larvae per cane. It is suspected that a European red currant species, *Ribes multiflorum* Kit. ex Schult. contributes resistance. 'Detvan', 'Mulka', 'Redstart', 'Rolan', 'Rosetta', 'Rondom', and 'Rovada' have had low larval counts. Some black currant cultivars from No. Sweden, Czech Republic and England have low counts, such as 'Black Naples' derivatives, 'Saunders' and 'Kerry'. Genetic resistance could be a good way to help control cane borers without using additional chemical pesticides.

Natural enemies seem to be scarce in commercial fields, but some parasitization has been found. The wasp parasitoid has not yet been identified. Some larvae are killed by disease, but the infection rate is low. Pruning out infected canes is one way to control this pest. A pheromone is now available which shows promise for control.

Apologies from the editor~

In the last newsletter, the spelling had been changed from digoxin in Diane Hall's article, Medicinal Herbs. I apologize for any misunderstanding and embarrassment I caused to Diane. Molly McNulty, editor

A GARDENER'S PERSPECTIVE

Kathy Wolfe

I'm beginning to feel the onset of a panic attack. Last summer, in a weak moment, I agreed to have my yard participate in the Skagit Symphony Garden tour. What was I thinking?! As my plants are just emerging from the near death experience of this winter (some are still in the intensive care stage), I am beginning to see the enormity of the task ahead. As my husband and I scrambled around the yard seeding, raking and cutting out damage, I took a deep breathe and began to formulate my gardening perspective.

You see, I love walking through a perfectly trimmed and finely thought out garden plan with beautifully sculpted hedgerows, stunning flower beds all in bloom, surrounded by an immaculate lawn. It just takes my breath away. However, looking around my own yard, this is not what I see. Our contemporary home sits in a naturally wooded landscape on a hillside in the country with ourselves as the two-man maintenance crew. Try to see it through our eyes.

If you visit please remember that where you see a pile of dead leaves in a corner, I see next fall's mulch. Where you see some sticks and branches piled onto each other in the woods, my birds find habitat. When you wonder why the rockery contains some rather overgrown species, just listen for a moment and hear my Pacific tree frogs singing in contentment, protected from predators. Do you wonder about some of my plant combinations? I only rejoice in finding a sunny spot for an item generously given by a friend from her favorite cutting or one bought on a whim from the local nursery.

For years we fought the moss in the lawn but now we say "embrace the green". So we will continue to spruce the place up in preparation for our visitors while also taking some time out just to enjoy the place we call home.

In all of our gardens we learn to plan for our site, our home design, our budget and the maintenance time we each have available. Every place is unique and individual and we learn as much about the gardener as the garden when we visit. Take time to celebrate your own style of landscape.

To enjoy a wide variety of gardens, come to The Skagit Symphony Garden tour which takes place on Sunday, June 28 from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Tickets are \$25.00. Call 360-848-9336 for information.



Master Gardener Education Opportunities

Do You Like to Talk About Gardening?

Here's your chance! We have received several requests to give very basic gardening talks about growing vegetables in your backyard or in a container.

The talk would be just an hour or so, for small groups of beginning gardeners and you could team teach with time as well as for the presentation time. A great way to give outreach to our community.

If you would consider this opportunity please email or call Diana Wisen 336-8958 for more information.



A LADY BUG BY ANY OTHER NAME

Africa - Crop Picker

China - Flower Lady

India - Indra's Cowherd

Iran - Good News ~ continued next page--- 4

Israel - Moses' Cows
Switzerland - Lord God's Little Fatty
Sweden - Key-Maid
Switzerland - Lord God's Little Fatty
Submitted by Virgene Link
Found by Sue Moulton

Sunshine Report

Four cards were mailed to ailing Master Gardeners in March. They were sent to Jeanne Thomsen, Barbara Lloyd, Anna Ankrum, and Judith Ring. One thank you note was also sent out.

Agnes Johnson has volunteered to write these, but needs your help.

When requesting either a get well card or a thank you note it is vital to include name, address and if a thank you and all information about the donation and it's value.

For instance: John Doe, Manager Soils
c/o Garden Center
Mount Vernon
for: donation of 20 bags of special potting soil. Value: \$60.00

For cards to ill MG'S, is it for recovery or support and cheer?

Please be clear so Agnes can do her job.
Agnes can be reached by phone at 360-757-8911 or E-mail Aggiekj@msn.com.



CRITTER CORNER GONE BUGGY

Cabbage MAGGOT
Virgene Link,
Insect Collection



The cabbage maggot may seriously injure cabbage, cauliflower, turnip, radish and related crucifer crops. Early planted crucifers or seed beds of late ones are more likely to be attacked. Cool, wet, spring weather is an advantage to these pests. Young plants between emergence and until a month after planting are most vulnerable.

The young maggot begins feeding on the tender rootlets and then rasps out a channel in the main root of the plant. An early indication of attack to the cabbage plant is the symptoms of the plant wilting badly during the heat of the day. The plant either dies in a few days or persists in a sickly condition for some time. In cases where the plant dies quickly, there usually are a large number of maggots that riddle the root making way for decay organisms (soft rot) to get in and take over quickly. If such a plant is dug up, one should be able to see the whitish maggots in the soil around the roots of the injured plants. They may at first resemble a grain of rice.

Cabbage maggot adults are true flies, Diptera (two wings), are dark grey and about half the size (5mm) of a common housefly. They are seldom seen by home gardeners. The adults are long-legged and closely related to the seed corn maggot. The larvae are small, white and legless, tapered toward the head and with a blunted rear. They have a pair of black mouth hooks that curve downward for rasping. The larvae pass to the puparium, a reddish or tan capsule resembling a grain of wheat, in the soil near the plant.

The adult flies emerge from the soil where they overwintered as pupae about the time the first crucifer plants are set in the garden. The females either tuck the eggs down between the plant stem and the soil of transplants, or lay eggs in a recently planted field so that the young plant is attacked at emergence.

BEE COLUMN #5

Eggs hatch in about 4 to 10 days. In about 3 weeks maggots are full grown (approx. 10 mm). The pupal stage lasts 12 - 18 days and the adults emerge from the puparium. There may be three broods of cabbage maggot in our area.

Always chop and disc under crop residue to dry and decompose it. Rotate crops as the pupae overwinter in the soil. Use floating row covers to protect seedlings. More information is available from EB 0859 and FSIPM003 online at www.skagit.wsu.edu (publications).

Bruce D. Vilders

Let's talk about honey. Specifically let's talk about honey that has not been diluted or exposed to toxic chemicals for that is what most backyard beekeepers as well as consumers strive for. Yet when we walk through the supermarket we see a wide and bewildering array of honey hosting different labels all attesting to the purity of the contents. At this point it is buyer beware! Lots of commercially sold honey is diluted down, heated up, added to or just not what it is purported to be. The now defunct Seattle P.I. did an extensive in-depth story late this past winter on how Chinese honey has made its way into our country, delivered through a nation-wide distribution system with wholesalers putting misleading (American) labels on literally tons of honey. This foreign honey was found to be diluted with water, corn syrup, and artificial sweeteners. It was definitely not pure honey. What the average consumer thought they were buying was unidentifiable as adulterated honey and just outright honey fraud.

Another area of concern is the use of the term "organic" when applied to honey. Unless you are keeping bees on an island somewhere it would be very difficult to have them produce true organic honey. Bees can fly up to 5 miles in their daily search for pollen and nectar, so the odds of running into chemicals, fertilizers and insecticides are pretty good. National and state guidelines that certify food



Let's talk
HONEY!

sources as "organic" are very stringent. But there is very little, if any, government oversight when it comes to the labeling of honey. Within the beekeeping world it is recognized that the term "natural" is the preferred term to organic. After all, most large-scale commercial beekeepers (often overseeing thousands of hives) are using food supplements as well as chemicals to fight the diseases that bees are susceptible to. You can't chemically spray a hive for mites then turn around and sell you honey as "organic" or natural. Well, you can, but it wouldn't be right or accurate. So when you see this type of labeling please note that it is next to impossible for it to be truly 'organic'.

Many backyard beekeepers are working hard to maintain natural hives of bees i.e. not using toxic chemicals, artificial food supplements or medications on their bees. Older, more traditional, and newer techniques are being used to fight the diseases or mites, techniques that don't use toxic chemicals. For example, mites that live on

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honeybees can be removed by sprinkling white powdered sugar directly onto the bees. In combination with a screened hive bottom, when sugared, the mites slip off the back of the bee and fall through the bottom of the hive, unable to climb back up. It is this type of noninvasive solution to hive problems that keepers try to incorporate into their apiary.

For the consumer looking to buy raw, natural honey the best advice is to look for honey at your local farmer's market, supermarket, or food cooperative. Buying directly from a beekeeper is the ideal situation as it keeps the local economy and the beekeeper supported and you're usually assured a quality product. Looking for commercial honey that is locally raised and bottled can be an excellent source as well. In Skagit County there is High Country honey from Burlington's Belleville Honey Company, which can be found at the Skagit Food Coop in Mount Vernon and Whole Foods in Seattle.

There are well over 300 distinct varieties of honey that are specific to flowers, plants, trees and crops. My three local favorites include honey from cherry orchards, wild blackberries or fireweed from our mountain meadows. But my ultimate is Tupelo honey, made from the Tupelo (flowering) tree, which is located only in the area around Tupelo, Mississippi. It is very rare and hard to find but well worth looking for and, ultimately, the premium price it fetches.

My middle child recently married a fine young man from Alabama and we had the opportunity to visit his home and family. While in the South, I made a search of small country grocery stores and food cooperatives. Finally, I found what I was looking for: Tupelo. I purchased every jar they had and it's been honey nirvana around my place ever since.

Taste, quality and natural bee-raising techniques all enter into the creation of this special elixir we know as honey. Whether you're searching the high-end stores of Seattle, the farmer's markets of Skagit

County or sweet-home Alabama, the hunt for natural honey is worth the time and effort.

Resources suggested: "Natural Beekeeping: Organic Approaches to Modern Apiculture" by Ross Conrad ISBN 978-1-933392-08-0



His labor is a chant, His
idleness a tune; Oh, for
a bee's experience Of
clovers and of noon!
Author: Emily Dickinson
Source: Poems--The Bee
(XV)

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SKAGIT COUNTY EXTENSION

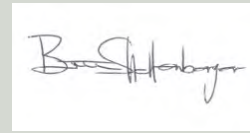
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