

Today's column is full of announcements of gardening events to attend. Before we begin, here's one final installment on the flicker fables.

Early this spring we put up a flicker birdhouse as a defense against the young flicker couple who were trying to drill and hammer their way into our attic so they could raise a brood of little flickerettes. We went on line and found a site that told how to build a flicker birdhouse; had a friend build us one; and installed it up under our eaves where most of the damage was occurring.

The flickers soon began making a home there and nesting. But, alas, the birdhouse was taken over by starlings. No more rapping, tapping and ripping, but a whole lot of noise and scritchng and scratching. But wait! There's more!

Soon we knew babies had hatched because we could hear them chirping and we saw not two starlings, but about five starlings flying hither and thither frantically feeding the baby birdlets. Every once in a while we would hear faint rapping and tapping from inside the birdhouse. We couldn't stand it any longer and got out our binoculars to investigate. We had tried to inspect with a ladder when no flying parentals and uncles and aunties were around, but it wasn't possible. The starlings were feeding the youngsters nearly around the clock.

We were amazed to see that one of the babies was rather huge, lightly colored and had a very long pointy beak. It was actually hilarious because he nearly filled up the hole to the birdhouse and atop his head and shoulders were gathered all the starling babies. No wonder the starlings had to bring in reinforcements! That's going to be one confused flicker when he grows up. And that, dear readers, is the final installment to the flicker fables.

The moral of this story is: If you choose to put up a flicker birdhouse, mount it really far away from your house in a tall tree and hope that no starlings take residence. Actually, there is one more tale to tell. My dear sweet husband spent most of his Sunday afternoon patching and repairing all the damage the flickers had done to our house in spite of the homey birdhouse we put up to deter them. And, we have about eight months to figure out how to keep the flickers away from the side of our house next spring. The End.

This Saturday and Sunday, June 9 and 10, you can "Catch the rain that would have washed away!" North Kitsap Options Program is having a rain barrel sale at Poulsbo Market Thriftway, Hostmark and Hwy 305, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Rain barrels with hardware are \$30 each.

Rainflower is a new store for gardeners that has opened in Poulsbo at 18830 Front Street (across from the Olympic Spa). Owner Malinda (CORRECT SPELLING) Wagner has lined up a great selection of classes and speakers. Call 360-779-3600 and request a class list for this summer. Better yet, stop in, you'll love the shop.

Bainbridge Gardens is offering classes on all aspects of organic gardening nearly every Saturday and Sunday during June. The nursery is now one hundred percent organic. Call the nursery at 206-842-5888 to sign up for classes. Fees are usually five dollars. Ask to be put on the mailing list.

It's also time for garden tours. Sometimes touring outstanding gardens can be a bit daunting, but you'll always take away a few ideas and for sure you'll be contributing to very worthy causes. I'll provide more details in the coming weeks but here's a listing of them so you can mark your calendars now:

Gifts of the Garden, the South Kitsap Garden Tour, is June 23 and 24 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets are \$15. The tour is a benefit for the Kerry Ogden Memorial Scholarship Fund for disadvantaged youth. For more information call Gloria at 360-535-6163. This event is sponsored by the Kitsap Housing Authority.

Tickets for the Thirteenth Annual Bainbridge in Bloom Garden Tour are on sale now. The dates are Saturday and Sunday, July 14 and 15 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Prices are \$25 for adults and \$12 for kids ages four to twelve. Purchase tickets at Bainbridge Gardens, Bay Hay and Feed, Kingston Garden Shop, Port Orchard Nursery, Valley Nursery, or call 206-842-7901. Proceeds benefit the BI Arts and Humanities Council.

Summer Splendor Garden Tour sponsored by the Silverdale Chamber of Commerce is Saturday and Sunday, July 21 and 22 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets are \$15 purchased through the Chamber. Call 360-692-6800 for ticket information.

Contact Peg with comments or questions in care of this newspaper or at gardenmentor@yahoo.com