

A great way to get ideas for your own garden and a super way to help support worthwhile fundraisers is to attend one of our county-wide garden tours.

South Kitsap's "Gifts of the Garden" Tour is Saturday and Sunday June 23 and 24 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets are available at Kitsap Consolidated Housing Authority by calling 360-535-6163, at Sidney Village in downtown Port Orchard, Elegant Clutter at the South Kitsap Mall and at Gardenscapes Nursery. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$7 for kids. Kitsap Transit is offering free shuttle services to and from gardens from pick up points at Givens Center, Fred Meyer and South Kitsap Mall

The tour honors Kerry Ogden a dedicated volunteer tutor and part-time staff person for Kitsap County Consolidated Housing Authority. Sadly, she died in a car accident two years ago. The proceeds will benefit the Kerry Ogden Memorial Scholarship to help fund higher education for disadvantaged Kitsap County kids.

The garden of Mary Ann Byhre offers views of Puget Sound and Mount Rainier and is a plant collector's paradise. David and Lisa Connelly's specialty is vegetables planted in a user-friendly and eye-pleasing wagon wheel design. Connelly's grandparents, Glen and Oleah Greseth, own Port Orchard Nursery. At the garden of Wendy and David Zukowski tour attendees will discover plants for shade and sunshine in every hue, color and texture imaginable festooning the garden spaces. Since 1977 Mary Margaret and Walter Shuford have lovingly created and tended their enthralling twelve-acres of gardens. Close to downtown Port Orchard a white picket fence surrounds the mini-farm and garden retreat of Deb Howard, community service director for KCCHA, and her husband Jim who've wonderfully integrated their love of pets with their love of gardening.

Kids' activities are at the Givens Community Center, surrounded by drought tolerant plants in an incredible water-wise garden planted and tended by Kitsap County Master Gardeners. I'm helping out on both Saturday and Sunday in the mornings. Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer your gardening questions. Educational presentations throughout the day will cover "Septic-Wise Gardening" on Saturday and "Rain Barrels" on Sunday.

Garden arts and crafts will be highlighted at each garden as well as plants and book sales. When you're hungry treat yourself to delectable salads and sandwiches from \$5.95 to \$6.75 catered by Le Garmache' Catering. At the Byhre home find Mavis Akiyoshi who created the tour's exquisite poster featuring her watercolor "Down the Garden Path." Signed Posters can be purchased for \$15.

Celebrate the Thirteenth Annual Bainbridge in Bloom Garden Tour Saturday and Sunday July 14 and 15 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets are available and going fast at \$25 for adults and twelve dollars for children ages four through twelve. Purchase tickets at Valley Nursery, Bainbridge Gardens, Winslow Hardware, and Bay Hay and Feed or by calling 206-219-3182. Proceeds from the tour benefit the Bainbridge Island Arts and Humanities Council.

In addition to tantalizing gardens you'll also find food, art, plants, books and much much more. Bring money to spend on treats for gardeners. Luncheon each day is catered by San Carlos Restaurant. At the garden of Ann Lovejoy you'll be tempted by a book sale with hand-picked garden books, recommended for the Northwest gardener; the 2001 garden tour poster and past posters; and a plant sale offering selections of rare and unusual plants from Sundquist Nursery. And, I'll be there as a docent on Saturday morning.

Artists are featured at the garden of Elisa and Tim Corcoran. You'll find every temptation imaginable. Free Lectures and catered luncheon (\$10) will be at the garden of Sherri and Stephen Wilson. Saturday's lectures are by Darsie Beck, Hardscape and Waterscape Designer; David Laskin, Co-author of "Artists in Their Gardens;"

and Debra Prinzing, Garden Editor “Seattle Homes and Lifestyle.” Sunday’s lectures are by Ian Bentryn, Bainbridge Island Vineyards and Winery; Lorna Jordan, Puget Sound Environmental Learning Center and Ciscoe Morris, Host of KIRO 710’s “Gardening with Ciscoe.”

You’ll have a week to rest your feet and then head into Silverdale for the Summer Splendor Garden Tour sponsored by the Silverdale Chamber of Commerce. The event on Saturday and Sunday, July 21 and 22, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. for \$15 will benefit the Clear Creek Trail. Ciscoe Morris is the featured speaker at a special \$25 event at Klahowya Secondary School on Saturday from 6 to 9 p.m. The price includes the garden tours too. I’ll give more details in a future column, but mark your calendars now and call the Silverdale Chamber at 360-692-6800 to purchase tickets.

Send comments or questions to Peg at gardenmentor@yahoo.com or in care of this newspaper.