

This week's column is about native plants and a reminder about our Kitsap County Fair. First of all you'll want to take yourselves and your families to a salmon feast at Central Market off of Highway 305 in Poulsbo. The salmon dinner benefiting the Liberty Bay Nearshore Habitat Project runs from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday August 11. Be sure to buy a dollar raffle ticket to win an awesome framed pastel of several salmon. Activities are actually from 8 a.m. through 6 p.m. in Poulsbo that whole day.

Volunteers will work on the shoreline from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. starting at Lions Park (at 5th and Fjord Drive). From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Back at Central Market to provide native plant information and from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. you'll be able to meet with and talk to Master Composters and Nearshore Experts. Even if you can't make these events you'll want to stop at Central Market and pick up their current newsletter telling about native plants. Also notice the Nearshore Habitat Project display by the coffee shop.

Native plants are not only great along shorelines they're ideal for our garden landscaping too. The Kitsap Conservation District in partnership with the Suquamish Tribe, WSU Master Gardeners, Olympic Chapter of the Native Plant Society and the Kitsap County Stormwater Management's Stream Team have all pooled their resources to present a not-to-be-missed opportunity to learn about the importance of native plants in our watersheds.

The five-hour workshop is Saturday, August 18. The program includes two hours of lecture, a break for lunch and a two-hour field trip to the Bremerton Watershed. While there, participants will view native plants in natural settings, see how the plants assist in maintaining a healthy stream buffer and learn the interrelationships with plants, fish and wildlife. Participants will also learn about and view non-native invasive plants. Contact Sandra Jacobson, Native Plant Salvage Coordinator at the Kitsap Conservation District at 360-337-7171 Extension 0 (zero) with any questions.

Russell Link, Arthur R. Krukeberg, and Jim Pojar with Andy MacKinnon have all written great books on native plants. You can check their books out at the library. Be careful, you'll want to have your very own copies. Russell Link's book is "Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest" published by UW Press in association with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. It's 313 pages of the most incredible and user-friendly information you'll ever find. You'll not only be able to create a wildlife habitat in your gardens you can also make a place of beauty and enjoyment for yourselves as well.

Krukeberg's book "Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest" also published by UW Press has 282 pages of excellent plant information with very good illustrations. This book has been the bible for propagating, planting and studying native plants. "Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast" for Washington, Oregon, British Columbia and Alaska is a superb field guide compiled by Pojar and MacKinnon and published by Lone Pine Publishing. You'll also read about the plants' uses, native people's medicinal uses and customs, and the unique characteristics of the plants and the origins of their names.

Don't forget to enter hobbies, flowers, produce, photography, or anything else you can think of at our Kitsap County Fair. The fair starts Wednesday August 22 and runs through Sunday August 26. You can pick up an exhibitor's pamphlet at the fairgrounds, the Extension Office (715 Sidney, Port Orchard) or at our local libraries. To enter you'll need to purchase an exhibitor's pass to admit you to the fair every day for the whole week. Exhibitor's passes are seven dollars for adults (18 to 59) and four dollars for youth (under 17) and seniors (60 and up). Produce items, fruits, nuts and veggies are entered at President's Hall on Monday August 20 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Photos, art, quilts, handicrafts and hobby lobby items are entered Saturday and Sunday August 10 and 11 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Floral displays and other horticulture are entered Monday August 20 in the Pavilion from noon to 8 p.m. (Psssttt, usually every entry gets a ribbon.)