

So much to tell, so little space. Here are two announcements before we finish up on composting.

The Extension Office is accepting applications for the 2002 Master Gardeners. The November 2 deadline is earlier this year so don't procrastinate. Call Louise Turner at Kitsap County Cooperative Extension at 337-7157 extension 7224 during the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday to request an application.

Kitsap County Historical Society's temporary exhibit called "Kitsap County: Pickings, Produce and Other Incredible Edibles" opened October 5 and continues this month. The exhibit explores and displays Kitsap's agricultural roots beginning with the Native Americans and continuing to the present. You can see the exhibit at 280 Fourth Street in Bremerton. Call 360-479-6226 for further details.

The Historical Society Speaker Series explores agriculture in our county. Suquamish Cultural Specialist Peggy Dean will explain local gathering practices and uses of native plants this Saturday October 20 at 2 p.m. in Bremerton City Council Chambers at 239 Fourth Street.

Worm composting (vermiculture) is a great way to compost kitchen scraps. Red wiggler worms eat vegetable scraps, grains, fruit rinds and peels, breads, coffee grounds, filters and tea bags. They can't eat meat, fish, cheese, oily foods, butter or animal products. A worm bin takes very little space in your kitchen, garage or garden. A two-foot by four-foot worm box will handle eight pounds of kitchen scraps a week (the amount produced by two or three adults).

To see the biggest worm bin in Kitsap County contact Sandra Spago at 360-779-6033 and arrange a tour to Kitsap E-Z Earth site, at the Skills Center on National Avenue. It's an innovative partnership between Holly Ridge Center and Peninsula Services. The goal of E-Z Earth is to create training and employment opportunities for adults with disabilities. Three million red worms in a 32-foot-long bin create rich vermicompost at the Skills Center.

Red wiggler worms are "organic garbage disposals." To adopt your own red wigglers get them from a worm-composting friend, Master Gardener or Master Composter. Kitsap E-Z Earth also sells the worms. Start with about a pound of worms. Worm populations double every 90 days. Find plans for bins at the compost website [www.mastercomposter.com/worm/wormcomp](http://www.mastercomposter.com/worm/wormcomp) or visit the library to check out "Worms Eat My Garbage" by Mary Appelhof, or call 360-337-5777 and ask for plans and information to make worm bins.

One of the easiest ways to build a worm bin is with a five to ten-gallon opaque plastic tub with a snug fitting lid. Begin by drilling holes about six inches from the container bottom on all sides making the holes one-eighth inch wide and one-inch apart. Make several rows. It's best not to drill holes in the bottom of the bin because seeping liquids can be messy.

Fill the worm bin with bedding made from shredded up paper (newspaper is great). Soak the shredded paper in a bucket of water and squeeze it out until the water stops dripping. Fluff the paper back up and fill the bin to about half full. Add a layer of soil, fine sand, finely chopped leaves, sawdust or ground egg shells. Now add the worms in the middle of the bedding materials. Place chopped up food scraps in the middle of the bedding with the worms. Cover the layers up with a final covering of moist shredded paper.

Bins can stay outside or inside but temperatures should be no hotter than 90 degrees and no colder than 40 degrees. Try storing your bin in the garage or under the sink. Worms don't like to be disturbed. Add food by gently moving the bedding and burying the food in the center of the bin. You'll know how quickly they're eating the food by the vermicompost which will look quite a bit like coffee grounds.

You'll harvest and use vermicompost to nourish houseplants, outdoor plants or add to your compost pile. It's also good to use to make compost tea (but that's another subject). Move the vermicompost to one side of the box and put more bedding, grit and food on the other side of the box and harvest the vermicompost. Leave enough worm compost to start processing the new bedding and food. Some books recommend waiting one to six weeks for the worms to move into the new bedding area before harvesting.

*This is a lot of information to squeeze into my column today. If you have any questions please email me at [gardenmentor@yahoo.com](mailto:gardenmentor@yahoo.com) or write to me in care of this paper.*