

When visiting your favorite nursery have you ever noticed the signs or nametags with the letters WCN or WCL and wondered what they mean? Megan Pulkkinen, WCN, told me all about this important designation. I also learned about the Olympic Chapter of WSNLA. The letters WCN and WCL are good letters to know. They mean “Washington Certified Nursery Professional” and “Washington Certified Landscaper.”

WCNs and WCLs must work 2000 hours with a licensed nursery, landscape contractor or a WSNLA approved institution. Each WCN candidate takes classes and studies a twenty-two chapter training manual covering major aspects of the nursery industry from “Introductory Botany” to “Washington Laws and Regulations.” WCLs study the same materials and concentrate on soils, how plants grow, naming of plants, water and watering systems, fertilizers, plant pests and diseases, weeds and weed control, turfgrass management, pruning and laws and regulations.

The three-hour certification test is only given twice-yearly in March and October. Applicants choose to test for certification as either and/or both a WCN or WCL. Candidates must identify at least 350 plants using both botanic and common names. WCNs and WCLs attend additional classes every year for three years and retest in three years. After six years of maintained certification the nursery professional or landscaper can apply for and receive lifetime certification. However, these professionals continue to hone their skills by taking classes and/or attending Washington State Nursery and Landscape Association meetings.

Our local chapter, the Olympic Chapter, of the Washington Certified Nursery and Landscape Professionals, meets the second Wednesday of each month at different nurseries and horticulture venues throughout the Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas. Local Landscape Designer Kate Easton is Secretary of the Olympic Chapter and George Bahr of Roadhouse Nursery is President-Elect of the State Chapter. Jan and George Bahr, Roadhouse Nursery owners, have been active and involved in the organization for years.

Visit the WCN/WCL Website at www.wsnla.org. Marianne Pratt is Executive Director and can answer any questions that arise. Her email is dirwsnla@nwrain.com. The group welcomes visitors. Membership is open and covers many different categories of the horticulture field. Dues range from \$56 for affiliates, \$140 for branch member and \$221 for associates. Call either 253-863-4482 or 800-672-7711 for more details on this worthwhile organization. Dues run from January through December of each year. You might want to find out about the program now and then pay your dues the beginning of January.

The rest of today’s column covers miscellaneous topics. Donna Paulson made a plethora of cement leaves lately. She told me about Storey Book Publishers offerings of small booklets with directions for many projects. Call 1-800-441-5700 and ask them to send you a catalogue. One of the booklets Donna ordered gives this recipe for cement leaves: one part Portland cement, three parts sand and two to three tablespoons of cement bonding adhesive per gallon of water. You can add pigment or not.

While we’re talking about the cement leaves, many people have been asking about the pigment. Fred Hill and Lowe’s carry pigment in shades of red, terra cotta, charcoal, brown and buff. Fred Hill can special order the green pigment but it takes about two weeks. So far Fred Hill is the only place with green pigment. Remember too that you can paint the leaves with latex paint.

We have lots of burlap bags if anyone is still looking for them. They’re one dollar each and the proceeds go to the Raab Park Youth Garden Fund and Raab Park Community Pea Patch Fund. Contact me in care of this newspaper or email at gardenmentor@yahoo.com.

I know it might seem a bit early, but Valley Nursery is now taking special orders for their “Hand Made Wreath Program.” You can place a custom designed wreath order with their creative staff. Call 779-3806 or stop by the nursery. Remember too that Valley Nursery and Bainbridge Gardens have wreath-making equipment that you can use during the months of November and December to make your own wreaths. Call the nurseries for details.