

Our county abounds with gardening resources. We'll talk about many of them in future columns. This week let's talk about the Kitsap Conservation District. The District has a staff person for each geographic area of the county. The office is located at 817 Sidney Avenue in Port Orchard. Office hours are Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can call 337-7171 or visit their website at [www.kitsapcd.org](http://www.kitsapcd.org).

Ongoing programs are: farm planning (information about planning a farm and solving problems); technology resources; CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) to establish buffers along eligible salmon streams in return for yearly rental payments and cost-sharing; the Native Plant Salvage Program (they'll come with volunteers to salvage native plants from areas that are being cleared for construction); the Conservation District Spring Plant Sale; the 2002 Native Plant Workshop; Doo for You (provides aged composted manure for free at the Fairgrounds each spring); and Realtor workshops (up-to-date information on current environmental issues).

The District also assists landowners and community groups in the following ways: livestock, manure and pasture management; stream bank restoration and prevention of erosion; wildlife habitat enhancement; woodland enhancement and maintenance; conservation tree and shrub plantings; educational presentations to schools and community groups; furnish soils information; provide Conservation Plans for farms and woodlands; provide information to landowners on cost-share assistance for BMP (Best Management Practices). Conservation District activities for January involve watershed education nights in Kingston and the annual Native Plants Workshop.

The first of the Watershed Education Nights is Thursday January 10 at 7:30 p.m. at Kingston Junior High. The workshop is open to the public and entirely free. Workshop attendees will receive a free native tree or shrub. Participants will learn how to create an earth-friendly environment on their property. The night is being sponsored by the Cutthroats of Carpenter Creek and the Conservation District. Steve Heacock with the CD says, "We'll talk about all aspects of how native plants were used by humans." Heacock adds those who "are interested in saving water and providing more covered area and food for species in the area" will want to attend. Future topics to be covered in March and May will include: Mud and Manure Management, Pesticides and Alternatives, Biointensive Gardening, Permaculture, Attracting Birds and Ethnobotany.

Two days later on Saturday January 12 don't miss the "Free 2002 Native Plant Workshop" sponsored by the CD and facilitated by Sandy Jacobson at 337-7171 Extension 0 or email [sandrajacobson@wa.nacdn.org](mailto:sandrajacobson@wa.nacdn.org). The workshop runs from 9 a.m. to noon followed by a native plant salvage from noon to 3 p.m. Wear your gardening clothes and bring boots and raingear. Begin at Eagles Nest, Thunderbird Banquet Room, 1195 NW Fairgrounds Road in Bremerton (Central Kitsap). Topics covered and presenters will be: 2002 Plant Sale Species Characteristics (Sandy Jacobson); Soils, Siting and Examples of Native Plants (Vaughn Everett, Wiltermood & Associates); and Backyard Wildlife, Ecosystem and Habitat (Klaus Richter, King County Water and Land Resources). After the speakers you'll be able to go out to a salvage site and dig up and take home some of your own native plants.

Speaking of native plants the District has a tree sale every year and if you haven't requested a newsletter from them you'll want to immediately. Either go to their website and look at the newsletter or pick one up at their office.. The deadline is fast approaching. All orders must be received on or before Friday January 18 at 4:30 p.m. FAX orders and mail orders are accepted but not over the phone or online. Orders can be picked up at the Fairgrounds (sheep and goat barn) on Friday and Saturday March 1 and 2.

Native Plants are ideal for our gardens. They're extremely waterwise and thrive in our very dry summers and very soggy winters. And the best part is they're really hardy and earth, wildlife and people friendly. Did I also mention carefree? What are you waiting for, contact the Conservation District today.